FOREST MANAGEMENT AND STUMP-TO-FOREST GATE CHAIN-OF-CUSTODY SURVEILLANCE EVALUATION REPORT

Minnesota Department of Natural Resources Minnesota, USA

SCS-FM/COC-00088N

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CERTIFIED 31 December 2021 EXPIRATION

er 2021 31 December 2026

DATE OF FIELD EVALUATION

27-29 September 2022

DATE OF REPORT FINALIZATION

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Foreword

Cycle in annual surveillance evaluations				
☑ 1 st annual evaluation	□ 2 nd annual evaluation	□ 3 rd annual evaluation	☐ 4 th annual evaluation	□ Other (5 th surveillance (COVID Extension):
Name of Forest Management Enterprise (FME) and abbreviation used in this report:				
MNDNR, MN DNR, or DNR				

All certificates issued by SCS under the aegis of the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) require annual evaluations to ascertain ongoing conformance with the requirements and standards of certification. A public summary of the initial evaluation is available on the FSC Certificate Database <u>http://info.fsc.org/</u>.

Pursuant to FSC and SCS guidelines, annual / surveillance evaluations are not intended to comprehensively examine the full scope of the certified forest operations, as the cost of a full-scope evaluation would be prohibitive and it is not mandated by FSC evaluation protocols. Rather, annual evaluations are comprised of three main components:

- A focused assessment of the status of any outstanding conditions or Corrective Action Requests (CARs; see discussion in section 4.0 for those CARs and their disposition as a result of this annual evaluation);
- Follow-up inquiry into any issues that may have arisen since the award of certification or prior to this evaluation; and
- As necessary given the breadth of coverage associated with the first two components, an additional focus on selected topics or issues, the selection of which is not known to the certificate holder prior to the evaluation.

Organization of the Report

This report of the results of our evaluation is divided into two sections. Section A provides the public summary and background information that is required by the Forest Stewardship Council. This section is made available to the public and is intended to provide an overview of the evaluation process, the management programs and policies applied to the forest, and the results of the evaluation. Section A will be posted on the FSC Certificate Database (<u>http://info.fsc.org/</u>) no less than 90 days after completion of the on-site evaluation. Section B contains more detailed results and information for required FSC record-keeping or the use by the FME.

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SECTION A – PUBLIC SUMMARY

1. General Information

1.1 Evaluation Team

Auditor name:	Stefan Bergmann	Auditor role:	Audit Team Leader
Qualifications:	Mr. Bergmann has been in the forestry and wood products field for near 20 years,		
	working across the US in fore	est policy, landow	ner extension, executive leadership,
	and forest certification. Prior	to joining SCS in	2017, he previously worked for
	Rainforest Alliance, overseeir	ng its Forest Stew	ardship Council [®] (FSC [®]) forest
	management auditing progra	im in the US. Stef	an is a lead FSC FM auditor and is
	qualified for Sustainable Fore	estry Initiative® au	uditing. He holds a BS in Wildlife
	Science and an MS in Forest F	Resources, both f	rom Oregon State University,
	Corvallis, Oregon, USA, and a	n MBA from Univ	versity of California Davis.
Auditor name:	Shannon Wilks	Auditor role:	Team Auditor
Qualifications:	Shannon Wilks has over 30 years of professional experience in the forest industry.		nal experience in the forest industry.
	Roles have included procurement, supply chain management, contract		
	negotiations and environmental management/certification compliance.		
	Experience includes 20 years with a global forest products company, 4 years of		
	industrial site management and 6 years as a forest certification auditor. Mr. Wilks		
	is a Controlled Wood Senior I	Lead Auditor for F	SC [®] Chain of Custody, FSC Forest
	Management, FSC Controlled	l Wood, Lead aud	itor for Sustainable Forestry
	Initiative (SFI [®]) Chain of Custe	ody, SFI Fiber Sou	ircing, SFI Forest Management, SFI
	Certified Sourcing, American	Tree Farm Syster	n [®] -Georgia Tree Farm Inspector
	#165961, Programme for the	Endorsement of	Forest Certification (PEFC™) Chain
	of Custody Standard and a Le	ad Auditor for ©	Sustainable Biomass Program (SBP).
	Mr. Wilks is a graduate of Lou	uisiana Tech Univ	ersity with a Bachelor of Science-
	Forest Management degree.	He is also a mem	ber of the Texas Forestry
	Association and holds a Texas	s Accredited Fore	ster certification #158.

1.2 Total Time Spent on Evaluation

Number of days spent on-site for evaluation:	2
Number of auditors participating in on-site evaluation:	2
Number of days spent by any technical experts (in addition to amount in line A):	0
Additional days spent on preparation, stakeholder consultation, and follow-up:	3
Total number of person days used in evaluation:	

1.3 Applicable Standards

All applicable FSC standards are available on the websites of FSC International (<u>www.fsc.org</u>) or SCS Global Services (<u>www.SCSglobalServices.com</u>). All standards are available on request from SCS Global Services via the comment form on our website. When no national standard exists for the country/region, SCS Interim Standards are developed by modifying SCS's Generic Interim Standard to reflect forest management in the region and by incorporating relevant components of any Draft Regional/National Standard and comments from stakeholders. More than one month prior to the start of the field evaluation, SCS Draft Interim Standards are provided to stakeholders identified by FSC International, SCS, forest managers under evaluation, and the FSC National or Regional Office for comment. SCS's COC indicators for FMEs are based on the most current versions of the FSC Chain of Custody Standard, FSC Standard for Group Entities in Forest Management Groups (FSC-STD-30-005), and FSC Accreditation Requirements. "Applicable standards" are all FSC standards with which the certified entity must comply, not just the standards selected for evaluation this year.

Standards applicable NOTE: Please include	☑ Forest Stewardship Standard(s), including version: FSC-US Forest Management Standard v 1-0
the full standard name and Version number	☑ FSC Trademark Standard (FSC-STD-50-001 V2-0)
and check all that apply.	SCS COC indicators for FMEs, V8-0
	□ FSC standard for group entities in forest management groups (FSC-STD- 30-005), V1-1
	□ Other:

1.4 Conversion Table English Units to Metric Units

Length Conversion Factors

To convert from	То	multiply by
Mile (US Statute)	Kilometer (km)	1.609347
Foot (ft.)	Meter (m)	0.3048
Yard (yd.)	Meter (m)	0.9144

Area Conversion Factors

To convert from	То	multiply by
Square foot (sq. ft.)	Square meter (m ²)	0.09290304
Acre (ac)	Hectare (ha)	0.4047

Volume Conversion Factors

To convert from	То	multiply by
Cubic foot (cu ft.)	Cubic meter (m ³)	0.02831685
Gallon (gal)	Liter (l)	4.546

Quick reference	
1 acre	= 0.404686 ha
1,000 acres	= 404.686 ha
1 board foot	= 0.00348 cubic meters
1,000 board feet	= 3.48 cubic meters
1 cubic foot	= 0.028317 cubic meters

2. Certification Evaluation Process

2.1 Evaluation Itinerary, Activities, and Site Notes

Tuesday, 27 September, 2022 - Hoyt Lakes (Opening Meeting) and Two Harbors Area

FMU/location/ sites visited	Activities/ notes
Formal DNR Opening Meeting	Brief introductions, review scope of evaluations, audit plan,
Hoyt Lakes Community Building	intro/update to FSC and SFI standards, confidentiality and public

	summary, conformance evaluation methods and tools, emergency
	required topics.
DNR Overview/Presentation	Commissioners Office and Division Directors provided an overview
Hoyt Lakes Community Building	of Department of Natural Resources, including administrative
	structure, public input opportunities, and related topics.
Two Harbors Area Presentation and Field Evaluations	Personnel provided overview of the area.
	All sites observed had completed Stand Exam List (SEL) process, appraisal documents, public bid notices, and contracts for sold stands. Surveys are conducted during SEL process for RTE species. SEL list reviewed by staff from DNR Fish and Wildlife and Ecological and Water Resources Divisions as well as the Forestry and Fish and Wildlife Divisions Archaeologist for cultural, historical, and archaeological features.
	Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs) and Aquatic Management Areas (AMAs) managed by Fish and Wildlife Division. Foresters are timber sale administrators for harvests on WMAs and AMAs. Monitoring of forest management activities is identified by role/activity. State Forests managed by MN DNR. Units of designation—recreation, research, and State Parks—have different objectives. State Natural Areas are managed by Ecological division, but they are outside of certification scope.
	Acquisition Aspect: guidance based on statutes. Example: School Trust Lands and LUP (Land Utilization Project) lands. LUP lands granted to state by federal government. DNR acquired lands. Conservation Lands-old farms/tax forfeited-split revenues with counties/state.
Permit X016418, Two Harbors	Timber sale partially completed in Spring 2020; white spruce/white pine-Planted in 1960s. Spruce budworm-added as additional plan addition (APA). Notification to other divisions for forest health. Comments through Forest Planning distributed back to local level. Addressed at local, if possible. No public comments, comments from Fisheries for retaining of diversity. Stand met goals of internal stakeholders.
	Stand partially completed in Spring 2020; remainder turned in as part of 2021 Timber Relief due to closure of markets/facilities. Refund for permits. Check for qualified logger training conducted on each. Contractor must be qualified before permit system is active. Utilized for logger training and insurance.
	Next activity is site preparation for planting. Competition of non- desirable species. Chemical and possible trenching. Planting of mixed conifers to be determined. Some delays due to relief. Potential for site to be out of production for 5+ years for artificial

	regeneration. Natural regeneration is monitored to ensure species composition meets requirements. Site has been ground surveyed and does not meet desired state stocking. Natural regeneration monitoring is conducted within 3 years. No water crossings or water features on parcel. Heavily used site by moose. Wildlife requested retention of conifer pockets for snow shelter post- harvest Smaller pockets of thermal cover observed post-harvest. Conifers within stands observed. Positive habitat provided from harvesting and cover.
Wood Turtle Project, Two Harbors	The wood turtle is a state threatened species in Minnesota. The Nongame Wildlife Program is working on a project on Wood Turtles with 4 main goals: 1) increase nest success, 2) reduce adult mortality, 3) conduct surveys and monitoring, and 4) conduct research to better understand habitat requirements. Habitat is sandy and gravely surfaces. Terrestrial migration after nesting. This project is a collaboration between the IA, MI, MN, and WI DNRs, with MN DNR's Nongame Wildlife Program as the lead on the project. The project has been funded by 3 USFWS Competitive State Wildlife Grants, which began in 2014 and the current grant ends in 2024.
	Study has found that 5% of nests hatching successfully; mitigation and protection from predators and public highways. Highway mitigation not successful and barriers removed. Nest success increased to 50%. Additional sites are being incorporated into study. Survey of additional sites for populations. Monitoring of long-term trends developed and implemented on 5-year basis. Gauge of success from management activities. Telemetry on 30 turtles for data analysis: habitat, movement patterns, etc.
	Early study results show that turtles attracted to forest stands with large canopy gaps. Modeling for current population indicates decline. Need 95% adult survival to maintain current populations; current estimate is 89% based on limited research project. Seasonal restrictions are in place to increase buffer size from 0.25- mile and harvesting periods. Exemptions for management activities are allowed for detailed survey of occurrences. Potential impacts: habitat decline, contaminants, and increased traffic/human population. Additional rivers to be surveyed for population occurrences.
TNC RMZ Gap Project-Baptism Site, Two Harbors	Parcel on Baptism River AMA, riparian restoration project of long- lived species of trees to help maintain habitat strongholds for brook trout and other cold water fisheries in the face of climate change. In 2018, The Nature Conservancy (TNC) applied and received funding from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation for restoring riparian forest resilience in Minnesota's North Shore watersheds. The project goals are to restore forest cover, diversity, and resilience along 55 miles of priority riparian forests in North

	 Shore watersheds within 400 feet of rivers. Planting of white pines, white spruce, white cedar, yellow birch and other long-lived species. Plantings conducted in protected areas to protect from browse. Harvested in 2016. Buffer established for riparian zone. TNC utilizes brush cutting for planting of long-lived species within project. Separate Conservation Partners Legacy project: cages observed for expansion of diversity within river corridor. Planted 2 years ago, with 2022 replacement of drought-impacted trees. TNC will continue monitoring planting for 10 years. Minimum buffer on trout stream in MN is 165 feet. Lake County has own MOA-Management Opportunity Area. Not aware of any public complaints regarding site, confirmed by interviews with personnel. Natural regeneration observed with variety of species. Conifers noted and retained within buffer protection. Buffer
	observed met/exceeded guidelines. No trash, trespass, or hydrocarbon spills observed
Permit X017038, Active Harvest Site, Two Harbors	County-owned property adjacent to state lands. County land harvested by same contractor prior to moving onto state land. Shared loading deck with county. Harvest operation completed on county first. Active job containing 26.6 acres with 2 harvest prescriptions. Final harvest designated area with reserves of white pine, white spruce, and diameter limits of sugar maples (6 to 16 inches). Harvest boundaries clearly defined and illustrated on sale map. Shelterwood harvest area: native plant community/Forest cover type. Sugar maples retained. Confirmed 4 species identified on NHI. Management of harvest operation presents no impacts based on interviews with DNR personnel. Procedures to check NHI during establishment and prior to harvesting activities, given sometimes multiple years between sale establishment and harvest operations. Significant natural regeneration of sugar maples observed within final harvest area of site. Harvest operations have not begun in shelterwood prescription at time of field audit. No observation of hydrocarbon spills observed.
	Interview with contractor confirms no knowledge of public complaints about harvest. Process of sale confirmed by contractor. Open market bid; pre-sale conference and routine monitoring multiple times per week by DNR personnel. Maps and GPS boundaries utilized by contractor. Confirmed knowledge of prescription. 2-person crew onsite. No one under 18 years old on job. First-aid kit, spill kit, and fire extinguishers on job and machines. Minnesota Logger Education Program training confirmed by contractor.
Little Marais WMA Project (discussion but no site visit).	30-acre site with treatment plan for 70 acres. 12-year project: timber sold, but logger returned and site subsequently went

Two Harbors	unsold. Birch decline stand. Funding from Ruffed Grouse Society and The Nature Conservancy for site prep and replanting. Weather impacts prevented site preparation. Historic deer wintering area. Large browse component with caged planting of long-lived conifer seedlings. Planting of species appropriate for native plant community.
Permit B014313, Two Harbors	Access to the unit is on Story Grade Road, an old railroad grade in exceptional condition. As a state managed road, the State of Minnesota completes maintenance, while Lake County completes road repairs.
	Mixed hardwood stands with conifer component in two clearcut blocks (118 acres and 88 acres). Only one block has been cut to date. The silvicultural goals are to, in part, increase the conifer component while addressing spruce budworm damage. The permit was turned back under the Timber Relief package.
	Ground-based site prep spraying occurred this summer in the cut block. Per DNR policy, the spray boundary is 100 feet from adjoining property lines. It will be planted in spring 2025 following mechanical disturbance to expose mineral soil. Species to be planted include white pine, jack pine, and/or red pine. Good aspen regeneration observed during the FSC audit.
	Cedar patches were reserved in the block for thermal cover for wildlife. The permit is located in the designated core lynx area. Harvests in this area must leave scattered slash and reserves.
Permit B015233, Two Harbors	Harvest split into two blocks (111 acres and 78 acres). Harvest includes both clearcut and thinning units. The permit has been approved and sold but is not cut.
	Norway pine mixed with white spruce and balsam fir planted stand. The thinning units are in the planted stand; this is the first thin and will be harvested in strips (remove 20 feet, leave 40 feet). It is operator-select, although all roads and landings must be approved by the DNR.
	The natural stands will be clearcut with reserves. The units include areas with spruce budworm defoliation. The reserves in the clearcut units will include both pockets and individual trees. The blocks include "summer chance" harvest areas, meaning that the harvests may include summer ground, depending on conditions at the time.
	As verified by the harvest map, Cutting Block 1 includes a designated 165-foot RMZ buffer along a trout stream. The buffer is in an area comprised primarily of birch. At the request of EWR, the forester is ensuring that a hardwood component is retained. The

	permit is located in a moose management area, which requires
	variable density thinning, retention of thermal cover, and
	maintenance of a hardwood component.
Daily debrief	Audit team debrief from field visits for day.
Wednesday, 28 September 2022 –	Tower & Hibbing Areas
FMU / location / sites visited	Activities / notes
Tower Area	Area presentation and review logistics for day.
Area Presentation and Logistics Review	All harvest sites observed had completed Stand Exam List (SEL) process, appraisal documents, public bid notices, and contracts for sold stands. Surveys are conducted during SEL process for RTE species. SEL list reviewed by DNR Fish and Wildlife, EWR, and Forestry Archaeologist for cultural, historical, and archaeological features prior to ground disturbing activities. Formal process utilized within DNR systems to validate MN qualified logging professionals, insurance requirements, and other specific requirements prior to bidding on state contracts. Private landowner requests: high visibility in community. Silviculture: Maintaining contracts, mentoring foresters in site descriptions and vendor tours for site prescriptions. Approximately 80-85% of sites offered are sold. PCA largest market—uncoated free sheet: significant consumer of aspen, tamarack, and wide range of species. Limited markets on eastern side of area—limited pine market. Fragmentation of ownership on adjacent stands increases amount of time to prepare. Fire season in late spring— balance of responsibilities. Personnel have 2 to 25 years of experience in area. Mentoring and institutional knowledge transfer process to new personnel. Select group on eastern side of area (Ely area) fields more complaints on management activities. Educational sessions with other groups (e.g., TNC), individual members of community, county fairs, and booths. Western side of area—seasonal hunting and forest community worker population. Less question and fewer complaints regarding management activities. Pilot project: all lands approach to forest management— landscape management. Groups include MNDNR, USFS, BIA, The Nature Conservancy, MN Timber Producers Association, and Soil Conservative District. Interdisciplinary Agency collaboration. LiDAR study by Wetland Research Group to evaluate habitat usage by
	species. 2 years in wood ducks. Positive aspects of coordination and communication between interdisciplinary agencies; major Issue between groups is policy impacts conflicting goal management. Example of coordination between Forestry/Wildlife: Stand 115 Joint Site Visit for harvest with multiple prescriptions and movement of harvest periods for retaining of conifers, thermal cover, and met trust policy of 5%

	reserves. Achieve objectives of MOA, Trust Land Policy.
	Difficult to achieve in Eastern area (Ely area). Host of issues—
	markets, stands, topography, and land ownership.
Permit B014590 Timber	2004/2005 aspen thinning—removed 1/3. Site prep of white
Harvest. Tower Area	spruce and white pine planting. Protected white pine from browse
	with spray and bud capping. White pine decline in stand due to
	browse and bluster rust. Highest deer nonulation in recent history
	(20-25 deer/sq mile) Lower population today (6/sq mile) 2016
	monitoring of species survival. Observation confirms part of site
	with conifer growth and no conifers in part of stand without
	planting 2020 stand evam list (evaluation for baryest) 10-year
	planning period to identify baryest. Cover type site index age and
	other aspects within model to identify stands for review. Beview
	with public assigned forester for ground review. Joint site visits
	schoduled with appropriate groups. Site selected for aspen over
	stenu removal. No commonts from interagonal confirmed
	Intergency Wildlife and EWD placed with diversity and energies
	composition for babitat 185 acros cold in 2020 - 2 major blocks
	Larvected in winter 2020 and completed in 2020—2 Inajor blocks.
	ground No NHL cultural or historical occurrences on site
	Granificant aspon regeneration cheened. Deserves of serifer and
	Significant aspen regeneration observed. Reserves of confier and
	non-nazardous snags. Biomass optional but was scheduled across
	site. Note for access in dry conditions. Trained MLEP contractor
	verified for narvest. Site scheduled for routine monitoring for
	aspen/spruce component. Early successional species nabitat for
	many years. Goal and confirmed stand will transition to higher
	quality stand for habitat. Beaver flowage on southern end of site.
	RMZ established on water features. No crossings. Snags and
	clumps/retention islands observed.
Smith Forest Road, Tower Area	Rebuilt in 2004. 3.6 miles—previous winter only. Built for forest
	management. Graded 2-3 times per year. Mow right of ways;
	intermittent woody control through contractor. No treatment in
	past year. Road is currently all season—increased stumpage. No
	trespass issues noted. Private hunting lodges. Recreational
	activities allowed, except no off trail ATV use. Permission for off-
	trail for game pickup. Gate with signage for managed forest. State
	road classification with GIS layer for identification. Maintenance
	and historical records are maintained. Tower area has 70+ miles of
	state forest roads.
Permit 36-64-21 #293, NP12:	Harvested in 2003; planted 45-20 acres white spruce, 25 acres
Silviculture site-Norway/Red	red/white pine. White spruce planted on heavy soils. Planted after
Pine & White Spruce, Tower	trenching in 2005. Monitoring done for 10 years. 5- and 10-year
Area	monitoring: trees per area declined by half from competition of
	aspen, maple, and birch. Brush decreased over time. Spruce
	release for over-story opening for establishment. Joint project for
	treatment with Wildlife. Diversity and thermal cover for wildlife-
	deer and moose. Significant diversity of species, spruce dominant
	position in canopy. Meets climate change recommendations for

	species diversity and long-lived conifers. Next entry for
	intermediate treatment in 20+/- years.
Permit B014259, Timber Harvest Tower Area	Stand appraisal in 2019, mature aspen with other species. Final harvest. Sold in 2019 to major forest products company. Winter harvest only due to access and soils. Total sale 51 acres in 3 harvest blocks. Irregular stand observed—easternmost block. Reserved pines, black ash, basswood, non-merchantable balsam, large limb aspens, and cedar. No EAB at this point. Stands adjoin beaver flowage. No biomass harvesting, slash retained on site. Ice bridge crossing utilized to cross beaver dam/pond. Restrictions apply if biomass removed for retaining 20%. Harvest operations completed in 2021 winter. Future plan is aspen regeneration. Observation confirms significant aspen regeneration. Reserve of cedar retained. Blue painted stand boundaries. Observation of ash retention stand. No BMP or utilization of fiber issues. Clean, professional harvest operation. No evidence of hydrocarbon, trash, or trespass issues. Ash retained to maintain water intake from ground. No private land ownership adjacent to stand for concerns regarding EAB.
Permit X017444 Timber Harvest, Tower Area	Active harvest with operations completed last week—34 acres; 2 harvest prescriptions. No equipment on site at time of audit— decked wood only. Row thinning of red pine; harvest cut on birch stand. Added timber of thinning due to location of birch. Old industry land acquired through exchange. Leave 40 feet between rows. Logging slash utilized on bumper trees for protection. Stand set up for multiple entries for thinning in between rows. Tree density, live crowns, and utilization. Target is to maintain 90 BA. Good protection of residual stand, minimal damage, and impacts to crowns. Wood decked to be delivered during frozen ground or dry conditions. Harvested by MLEP, verification within TSM-TOPS system for maintenance of contractor records. Auction bidders must be pre-qualified prior to bid on sales. No NHI or historical/cultural/archaeological occurrences on site. Reserve areas of balsam fir, white pines, and conifers within final harvest area. No water features on site. Regeneration in final harvest is birch and aspen. Scattered conifers observed in stand. Boundaries defined and no evidence of trespass, hydrocarbon spills or trash. Slash scattered within sale area. Professional harvest operation observed. Wildlife confirmed prescription and diversity within stand. Row thinning not ideal for wildlife but understand equipment availability—conventional equipment utilized. EWR commented desire to increase stand diversity in future harvest operations. Monitoring by DNR personnel confirmed during operations. Site will be naturally regenerated after harvest operations.
Permit B015352, Invasive	17-acre timber harvest completed in July 2022. Red pine, aspen,
Species & Wildlife, Tower Area	spruce, and jack pine final harvest with retention islands.
	Retention around non-operational fire tower. Stand boundaries

	defined. Adjacent to private landowner and power line running through stand. Notice to adjoining users of harvest operation. Response of safety and harvest debris kept off power line ROW from powerline company. Slash was piled and scheduled for burning in winter. Site scheduled to be planted with red pine. Invasive species treatment will impact reforestation until potential 2025. Treatment of invasive (Siberian pea shrub) with Garlon by stump spray in 2018. Follow-up ground treatment in 2022 by contractor—MN Commercial Applicator #20220237, valid expiration. Historical use as ornamental and hedge rows. No NHI or historical/cultural/archaeological occurrences on site. Hunter walking trail with game opening. Forestry and Wildlife coordination on planning. Managed recreational hunting for non- motorized traffic. Verbal communication with contractor for avoidance of invasive species area to minimize spread. No water nor crossings. Observed wildlife opening and retention islands. Professional harvest operation observed. Gated access. Trails were
	maintained and protected during harvest operations.
Permit B014675, Spruce Top Harvest, Tower Area	Completed in 2020. 3,500 stems per acre reduce to 1,500 stems in pre-commercial thinning. Clear around dominant spruce and remove tops from co-dominant trees. Removal of birch, tamarack, aspen, and birch for competition removal. Wet site with low flat topography. Spruce tops were protected in stand prior to scaling by DNR with contractor to prevent theft. Random monitoring to ensure compliance with contract requirements and protect soils. Low ground pressure equipment requirements to prevent damage to site. Market for tops not available; pre-commercial thinning would not have been performed due to cost. Operation is able to accomplish stand improvement, generate income, and eliminate cost for timber stand improvement.
Climate Adaptation Site, Tower Area	Strategy for assisted migration for species more prevalent in southern part of state/region to plant species—burr oak as test site for survival, vigor, and competition with native vegetation. Burr oak planted in 2019 at 800 trees per acre. Test plot is 1 acre in size. Monitoring in year 1 for survival. Next planned check is 2024 for survival and assessment. Burr oak was present on site prior to test, but not a common wide- spread species. Suitability tables within ECS (Ecological Classification System) reviewed and burr oak was favorable species. Estimated cursory at time of audit by experienced DNR personnel around 20% survival. Diversity within stand of aspen
	regeneration. Potential for pre commercial release if funding
	becomes available.
Permit X017021, Tower Area	22-acre harvest of black spruce adjacent to public roads. Stand is long and narrow adjacent to county road. Mature stand to allow sunlight for increased growth potential of younger adjacent stand. Evidence of blowdown of mature stems within stand observed.

	Lowland black spruce stand with smaller pocket of mature aspens. Retention of mature island/clumps of aspen. Boundaries defined and no evidence harvesting. Sale has been established and sold— no harvest activity at time of audit.
Permit B014135, Tower Area	Non-Game stop discussion with non-game EWR specialist. Northern goshawk is a state special concern species in Minnesota. It requires mature and older forest and is sensitive to habitat fragmentation. The Nongame Wildlife Program started a project in 2022 using case studies to examine the impacts of timber harvest on goshawks. Monitoring 18 goshawk territories that are projected to have DNR timber harvests over the next 10 years. Pre- and post-harvest monitoring will be conducted in each territory. Information will be collected on territory occupancy, location of the active nest, and nest success. Individuals will be identified using DNA from molted goshawk feathers. Case studies will be utilized to understand how goshawks respond to timber harvest in their territory. The results will help MNDNR manage for goshawks and update forest management guidelines for goshawk. Project is funded for pre-harvest monitoring; post-harvest monitoring will need to be secured. Current USFWS grant is 3-year project. Interview with retired DNR forest technician, with agency for 39 years. Concern about lack of flexibility for decisions on ground
	being replaced with technology and modeling. No complaints or confirmed conflicts with forestry and wildlife goals.
Hibbing Area Area Presentation and Logistics Review	Area presentation and review logistics for day.
Regeneration of CCC planted stand, Section 16-T60-R21w, Hibbing Area	Regeneration project following a completed final harvest of CCC- planted red pine on School Trust land. Original stand had been established in the early 1930s.
	Objective of harvest was to regenerate a healthy and fully stocked mixed red pine stand. The unit was harvested in June 2015 and contains scattered and clumped reserves of red pine, white pine, white spruce, aspen, paper birch, and red oak. The operator also retained advanced conifer and hardwood regeneration.
	Logged using broadcast full tree skidding during dry, non-frozen soil conditions to set back the brush competition and scarify for regeneration. Slash was piled and then chipped or burned. Disc trenching following harvest to break up root system of competition and reduce compaction. Site was disc trenched in October 2015, planted with red pine in spring 2016, and brush saw released in May 2020.

	 2022 regeneration survey found full stocking of planted red pine, 80% stocking of naturally seeded red pine, 80% stocking of oak, and 10% stocking of white and jack pines. The survey found that stocking levels of competition were greatest for raspberry, hazel, and willow. The DNR is planning on one more release before the stand will be considered free growing. To date, no herbicides have been used in the stand.
Reforestation project, Section 16-T60-R21se, Hibbing Area	Reforestation project of a completed final harvest of a CCC planting. Logging occurred in May 2021 using whole tree skidding to scarify for regeneration. Slash piles were burned last winter. Ground-based herbicide application occurred in June of this year. The application did not occur within a flagged 100-ft area from the sale boundary, and the boundary was well above the minimum 120-ft RMZ in the Minnesota Forest Management Guidelines for a wetland of its size. Mechanical scarificationof the harvest site in
	preparation for planting will occur in October. The unit will be planted with red and jack pine at 700 TPA in spring 2023. The RMZ has been planted with extra planting stock that was available. The plantings will be hand released in the RMZ. The project is located close to a community, with hikers, ATV users, hunters, and other recreationist regularly using the area. Per DNR policy, homeowners within 1/8 mile of the herbicide application were notified in writing of the application. No stakeholders have expressed concern with the harvest nor reforestation project.
Permit B014570, Hibbing Area	30-acre active harvest unit, although the crew was not onsite during the FSC audit. Completed load tickets were reviewed, verifying the presence of the required certificate code on the destination stub. The book, destination, and lockbox stubs are all linked through a unique ticket number. The permit is comprised of one cutting block. Most of the unit had been felled, with much of the material skidded and in decks on the landing. No residual damage was noted. The forester pointed out that stump height had been identified a concern, and the operator has been making improvements to reduce the stump height in order to maximize log quality.
	The landing was clean and well organized. All logs were clearly sorted. Among the merchandised products are "hurricane poles," which are wood utility poles used in hurricane prone areas because of their flexibility and strength. All equipment onsite was in excellent condition with no sign of leaks nor breakdowns.

	The permit had been internally reviewed as part of the area's compliance audits. Approximately 11 compliance audits occur per year in the area. No issues were identified for this permit during the compliance audit, as verified through an interview with the compliance auditor and review of the report. A goshawk nest site is known to exist on adjoining county land, although the EWR did not dispute the permit. Presently, the state has informational guidance for goshawk applicable to non-Trust lands and . is in the process of developing formal policy for goshawks on School Trust Lands, which will help to clarify
	pathways when similar situations occur in the future.
Nass Old Forest Management Complex (OFMC) & Old Growth Special Management Zone (SMZ), Hibbing Area (discussion only: no site visit)	Planned harvest in the vicinity of OFMC and SMZ. The OFMC and SMZ are centered around an elongated, narrow old growth white pine stand. The stand was stablished in 1921 and designated as old growth in 1990.
	OFMCs are intended to enhance the conservation value of designated old growth by managing additional stands adjacent to SMZs for older growth stage characteristics over time, and extending the buffering capacity of the area around old growth. SMZs are within 330 feet of designated old growth and intended to minimize exposing the old growth forest to edge effects.
	The old growth stand is surrounded by a single 56-acre mixed- species stand dominated by aspen established in 1964. The 56- acre stand was identified on the FY21Stand Exam List, and a regeneration harvest is planned. The OFMC and SMZ, and the harvest unit, is on School Trust lands.
	Planning for the harvest is an example of cross-departmental collaboration. It is an unusual case with limited management options given the shape of the stand. The SMZ implemented for the permit will be variable width with the greatest retention levels closest to the old growth.
	DNR staff agreed to reserve all cedar in the harvest unit, a long- lived species with wildlife benefits. Staff also agreed to reserve 6 TPA to support species diversity and habitat in the OFMC, as well as reserve advanced regeneration of white pine, white spruce, balsam fir, and aspen. Niche habitats and old growth features will also be protected, including rock outcrops with long-lived lichen and mosses.
	The permit has been sold but not cut.
Sand Creek Hunter Walking Trail	Located in the Bear River Ruffed Grouse Management Area, this 3-
(HWT), Leander Road, Hibbing	mile trail is part of a network of DNR-operated HWTs that provide

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Area	hunting opportunities to hunters who wish to avoid interference from motorized vehicles. Most HWTs provide easy access to areas managed for grouse and woodcock. Many of the trails, including this one, are gated to prevent OHV access. There was no sign of unauthorized access at the Sand Creek HTW.
	The area has 82 miles of HWTs. In most years, the majority of those trails are mowed semi-annually or annually in order to maintain access, usually supported by Conservation Partner Legacy Grants. Some are maintained by local volunteers.
	A 42-acre even-aged harvest in 3 blocks occurred in May 2021 along the Sand Creek HWT. The cuts are intended to promote habitat required by grouse and woodcock. The trail travels through stands representing multiple age classes from these and other previous harvests.
	Block 1 of the harvest includes a 4-acre reserve along Sand Creek. There is also a 200-ft lowland hardwood buffer. Scattered retention in the unit, including conifer clumps for thermal cover.
	Presently, DNR Region 2 is undertaking a 2-year study of trail use of HWTs by recreationists. By using trail cameras to monitor use, the objectives of the study are to quantify the rates and range of uses of trails, determine the proportion of hunter vs. non-hunter use, and understand how the use may vary throughout the year. Signs are posted at each trailhead to notify users of the study and provide local wildlife office contact information; a sign was verified as being present during the FSC audit.
Blueberry Hill Natural Origin Red Pine (NORP) artificial & natural regeneration, Section 17-T61-R21w, Hibbing Area	NORP site is estimated to have been established in 1906. The stand has been thinned several times, most recently in 2000. The final harvest took place in June 2017. Species present at harvest were red pine, white pine, jack pine, paper birch, aspen, balsam fir, and white spruce. There was also patchy advanced regeneration of white pine, red pine, balsam fir and birch, with a heavy hazel brush understory. Significant signs of <i>Diplodia spp.</i> on red pine regeneration.
	Broadcast full tree skidding occurred on dry, non-frozen soil conditions to set back the hazel brush and scarify the site for regeneration. Slash was piled, followed by chipping and burning. In July 2017, the site was hand seeded with a rotary seeder using a mix of conifers. In spring 2018, the site was planted with 1-0 red pine container seedlings at 400 TPA; variable density was incorporated into spacing after the site was covered. In December 2020, the site was release using brush saws.
	Regeneration surveys occurred in October 2018 and May 2020.

	Planted red pine was fully stocked by 2018. In 2020, natural red pine, jack pine and white pine were stocked at 31%, 31% and 15%, respectively. The surveys found that competition was primarily from hazel, but also raspberry, willow, red maple, and aspen.
	To date, several lessons have been learned from the regeneration project: (1) summertime harvest helped to set back competition; (2) sufficient soil disturbance (70-80% scarification) from harvest was key to prepare the site for planting, provide a seedbed for natural seeding, and to control competition; (3) container seedlings enabled the prescription to work without the use of herbicides; and (4) early brush saw release to control competition allowed development of crop trees along with germination and development of conifers from seed.
Permit X016885, Hibbing Area	28-acre completed clearcut. The permit is comprised of one block distributed across two locations. The permit was cut in February 2020. Aspen, jack pine, and spruce pulp and bolts were harvested, as well as balsam fir pulpwood. The sale included minimal biomass. Conifer clumps were reserved in the harvested areas for wildlife, as verified during the FSC audit. No residual damage was observed. The harvest borders an adjoining private parcel; property lines were verified as being painted.
Daily debrief	Audit team debrief from field visits for day.

Thursday, 29 September 2022

EDALL / leastion / sites visited	Astivities / vetes
FIVIO / location / sites visited	Activities / notes
Closing meeting preparation,	Audit team consolidates notes and confirms evaluation findings.
Virginia, MN & remote	
Closing meeting, Virginia, MN &	Brief summary of audit activities, present preliminary findings,
remote	confidentiality, SCS/FSC dispute policy, timeline for report, and
	discuss next steps.

2.2 Evaluation of Management Systems

SCS deploys interdisciplinary teams with expertise in forestry, social sciences, natural resource economics, and other relevant fields to assess an FME's conformance to FSC standards and policies. Evaluation methods include reviewing documents and records, interviewing FME personnel and contractors, implementing sampling strategies to visit a broad number of forest cover and harvest prescription types, observing implementation of management plans and policies in the field, and collecting and analyzing stakeholder input. When there is more than one team member, each member may review parts of the standards based on their background and expertise. On the final day of an evaluation, team members convene to deliberate the findings of the assessment jointly. This involves an analysis of all relevant field observations, interviews, stakeholder comments, and reviewed documents and records. Where consensus among team members cannot be achieved due to lack of evidence, conflicting evidence or differences of interpretation of the standards, the team is instructed to report these in the certification decision section and/or in observations.

3. Changes in Management Practices

There were no significant changes in the management and/or harvesting methods that affect the FME's conformance to the FSC standards and policies.

□ Significant changes occurred since the last evaluation that may affect the FME's conformance to FSC standards and policies (*describe*):

4. Results of Evaluation

4.1 Definitions of Major CARs, Minor CARs and Observations

Major CARs: Major nonconformances, either alone or in combination with nonconformances of all other applicable indicators, result (or are likely to result) in a fundamental failure to achieve the objectives of the relevant FSC Criterion given the uniqueness and fragility of each forest resource. These are corrective actions that must be resolved or closed out before a certificate can be awarded. If Major CARs arise after an operation is certified, the timeframe for correcting these nonconformances is typically shorter than for Minor CARs. Certification is contingent on the certified FME's response to the CAR within the stipulated time frame.

Minor CARs: These are corrective action requests in response to minor nonconformances, which are typically limited in scale or can be characterized as an unusual lapse in the system. Most Minor CARs are the result of nonconformance at the indicator-level. Corrective actions must be closed out within a specified time period of award of the certificate.

Observations: These are subject areas where the evaluation team concludes that there is conformance, but either future nonconformance may result due to inaction or the FME could achieve exemplary status through further refinement. Action on observations is voluntary and does not affect the maintenance of the certificate. However, observations can become CARs if performance with respect to the indicator(s) triggering the observation falls into nonconformance.

FM Principle	Cert/Re-cert Evaluation	1 st Annual Evaluation	2 nd Annual Evaluation	3 rd Annual Evaluation	4 th Annual Evaluation
No findings					
P1					
P2					
Р3					
Р4		OBS 4.4.c			
Р5					
P6	Minor 6.5.e.1				
Р7					
P8	Minor 8.4.a				

4.2 History of Findings for Certificate Period

Р9			
P10			
COC for FM			
Trademark			
Group			
Other			

4.3 Existing Corrective Action Requests and Observations

Finding Number: 2021.1			
Select one:	Major CAR	Minor CAR	Observation
FMU CAR/OBS issued to (when more than one FMU)	:	
Deadline	Pre-condition to certification	ication/recertification	
	\square 3 months from Issuance	ce of Final Report	
	☑ 12 months or next reg	ularly scheduled audit (sur	veillance or re-evaluation)
	Observartion – respon	ise is optional	,
	□ Other deadline (specif	y):	
Standard and Indicator	FSC-US Forest Manageme	nt Standard, Indicator 6.5.	e.1
Non-Conformity Evide	nce D Observation Just	tification and/or Explanation	on
While reviewing the site for	or permit number X017293	, it was unclear whether a r	riparian management
zone had been implement	ed as intended. The harves	st in question was a clearcu	t in a stand bordering a
river that had previously s	uffered blowdown from a v	wind event. In discussing th	e site there was initial
confusion over whether the	ne appropriate RMZ width s	should be 50 ft or 120 ft (la	ter confirmed to be 120
ft). In practice the RMZ se	emed to have placed using	an existing road as a borde	er, with the area on the
side of the road next to th	e river uncut, and the harv	est beginning on the other	side of the road. A GIS
layer later confirmed that the road was within 120 ft of the river, meaning that the road was too close to			
the river to act as an RMZ boundary. While acknowledging that the Minnesota Forest Management			
guidelines allow for some flexibility in establishing RMZ and the activities within them, this case did not			
demonstrate that RMZs were being implemented as designed in accordance with these guidelines.			
Non-Conformity Corrective Action Request U Observation; no Corrective Action is required			
implemented.			
FMF response (including	In early March of 2022 th	ne Forest Management Aca	demy (FMA) hosted a
any evidence submitted)	training workshon for for	est managers focused on "F	Revisiting Rinarian
	Management Zones and F	ilter Strips" in light of DNR	policy on implementation
	of the Minnesota Forest R	Resources Council's (MFRC)	Site-level Forest
Management Guidelines (FMGs).			
	0	,	
	A planning team comprisi	ng members of Forestry, Fi	sheries, Wildlife, and
	Ecological and Water Reso	ources was formed to deve	lop presentation content
	on riparian management	zones and filter strips inclue	ding specific timber sale
	mitigation strategy examples from field foresters. 96 staff from 3 Divisions		
	attended the 3-hour work	shop. Attendees contribute	ed to a vibrant discussion
	ot various issues surround	ling the FMGs on riparian a	rea and filter strip
	management. The worksh	hop has been recorded and	is available to anyone
DNR must ensure that tha implemented. FME response (including any evidence submitted)	t its guidelines for Riparian In early March of 2022, th training workshop for fore Management Zones and F of the Minnesota Forest F Management Guidelines (A planning team comprisi Ecological and Water Reso on riparian management i mitigation strategy examp attended the 3-hour work of various issues surround management. The worksh involved with forest coord	Management Zones are be ne Forest Management Aca est managers focused on "F filter Strips" in light of DNR tesources Council's (MFRC) (FMGs). Ing members of Forestry, Fis purces was formed to deve zones and filter strips inclue oles from field foresters. 96 tshop. Attendees contribute ling the FMGs on riparian a top has been recorded and dination.	eing properly idemy (FMA) hosted a Revisiting Riparian policy on implementation Site-level Forest sheries, Wildlife, and lop presentation content ding specific timber sale staff from 3 Divisions ed to a vibrant discussion irea and filter strip is available to anyone

	Following completion of the workshop, the planning team developed a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document summarizing the workshop information and many of the questions posed by forest managers during the interactive portions of the training. This document is available on the MFRC Site-level Guidelines Policy page of the DNR intranet (Interdisciplinary Forest Management Policy System.
	Purpose of the FAQs The purpose of the Riparian Management Zones and Filter Strips Frequently Answered Questions (FAQs) document is to address and provide summary responses to a variety of common questions related to filter strip and riparian area forest management guidelines (FMGs). The FMGs were developed by the Minnesota Forest Resources Council (MFRC) to mitigate negative outcomes potentially associated with timber harvest and ensure the sustainability of Minnesota's forest resource. Implementation of the FMGs is mandated by policy for timber harvests on State lands. Nonetheless, situations can arise where additional clarity may be needed to correctly implement the FMGs. This document is intended to address a variety of questions posed by practitioners working to implement the FMGs on active timber harvests.
	Intended Audience
	The intended audience for this FAQ document is DNR staff involved with timber sale planning, administration, and coordination. However, many of the questions may be relevant to a broader audience of practitioners engaged in timber harvest planning and administration.
SCS review	The agenda and attendance list for the Revisiting Riparian Management Zones and Filter Strips for Forest Managers Workshop, held on 2 March 2022, was reviewed by the audit team. The resulting document, Riparian Management Zones and Filter Strips: Frequently Answered Questions, was also reviewed.
	These materials verify that the MN DNR provided training to its field staff to about the guidelines for Riparian Management Zones. Interviews with field personnel confirmed their knowledge of the RMZ guidelines. Additionally, RMZs reviewed during field site visits during the FSC audit demonstrated conformance with the MN Forest Management Guidelines.
	The training, field implementation, and staff knowledge evaluated during the
Status of CAR:	
	Closed
	U Upgraded to Major
	🗀 Other decision (refer to description above)

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Finding Number: 2021.2				
Select one:	Major CAR	Minor CAR	Observation	
FMU CAR/OBS issued to (when more than one FMU)	:		
Deadline	□ Pre-condition to certifi	ication/recertification		
	□ 3 months from Issuance	e of Final Report		
	☑ 12 months or next reg	ularly scheduled audit (surv	veillance or re-evaluation)	
	Observartion – respon	se is optional		
	Other deadline (specify)	y):		
Standard and Indicator	FSC-US Forest Manageme	nt Standard, Indicator 8.4.a	a	
Non-Conformity Evide	nce D Observation Just	tification and/or Explanation	on	
Review of a 6-year old res	toration planting on Henry	Bjoring WMA indicated a h	igh degree of mortality in	
the planted jack pine seed	llings, as well as burr oak ar	id crab apple trees. The ma	anagement objectives for	
But even allowing for som	o a jack pine savannan, so a loss the tree mortality of	a fully stocked stand to tim	ber levels is not expected.	
wildlife manager indicated	d that there was not a form	al process for monitoring t	he success of the planting.	
and whether additional m	anagement activities will b	e needed. It is noteworthy	that the funding for these	
activities is reliant on grants. A significant investment was made in the site, and more may be needed				
from uncertain funding sources in order to accomplish the objectives.				
Non-Conformity Corrective Action Request Dobservation; no Corrective Action is required				
DNR needs to ensure that it is monitoring and documenting the degree to which its objectives in the				
management plans are being fulfilled, in order to enable revisions to the plan and objectives as				
necessary.				
any evidence submitted)	The Fish and Wildlife Divis	sion (FAW) has created a ne	ew reporting form	
	designed to provide a reco	ord of the project manager	nent, conservation	
	site-level project from pro	nosal through to complete	on This form will include	
	a definition of desired project outcomes ("what does done look like") a			
	threshold for success and a monitoring plan to determine if goals are being. or			
	have been, met.		с с,	
	A copy of the form for eac	ch FAW project will be hous	sed temporarily at the	
	FAW Area office with the	planned goal of storing the	se documents in FAWs	
	Wildlife and Aquatic Habit	tat Management Applicatic	on (WAHMA) database.	
	The system is currently ur	ndergoing a major restructu	uring, but the	
	implementation form is in	line to be part of the upda	ated system.	

SCS review	The newly created reporting form, Wildlife Habitat Project Report, was
	reviewed by the audit team. The form includes metrics for the degree to
	which its objectives in the management plans are fulfilled and what additional
	activities, if any, should be implemented.
	Among other topics, the form covers tree planning and seeding, vegetation
	control, mowing/sheering, wildlife openings, and mechanical/chemical items.
	The form also includes a record of project implementation supervision in
	which each site visit is documented and a post-practice implementation
	monitoring plan/record in which each site visit and observations on the level
	of project success is documented. The presence of the monitoring plan/record
	specifically addresses the topic of the finding that was issued in 2021.
	The audit team reviewed a sample of completed Wildlife Habitat Project
	Reports during the FSC audit. Interviews with field personnel confirmed their
	knowledge of the new form, its purpose, and completion of training
	associated with its implementation.
	The newly created reporting form, field implementation, and staff knowledge
	evaluated during the FSC audit warrants closure of the finding.
Status of CAR:	⊠ Closed
	Upgraded to Major
	□ Other decision (refer to description above)

4.4 New Corrective Action Requests and Observations

Finding Number: 2022.1				
Major CAR	Minor CAR	Observation		
when more than one FMU)	:			
Pre-condition to certifi	cation/recertification			
□ 3 months from Issuance	e of Final Report			
□ 12 months or next reg	ularly scheduled audit (surv	veillance or re-evaluation)		
\boxtimes Observartion – response is optional				
\Box Other deadline (specify):				
FSC-US Forest Management Standard (V1-0), Indicator 4.4.c				
People who are subject to direct adverse effects of management operations				
are apprised of relevant activities in advance of the action so that they may				
express concern.				
Non-Conformity Evidence Solution Statistication and/or Explanation				
The FME has developed a procedure, Forest Management on Lands Administered by the Fish and Wildlife				
Division (dated 21 April 2022). The procedure is currenty in draft form; the timeline for finalization and				
approval is unclear.				
	 □ Major CAR when more than one FMU) □ Pre-condition to certifi □ 3 months from Issuanc □ 12 months or next reg ○ Observartion – respon □ Other deadline (specify) FSC-US Forest Manageme People who are subject to are apprised of relevant are express concern. nce ☑ Observation Just procedure, Forest Manageme Discription (Specify) 	□ Major CAR □ Minor CAR when more than one FMU): □ □ Pre-condition to certification/recertification □ □ 3 months from Issuance of Final Report □ □ 12 months or next regularly scheduled audit (surverse) ○ Observartion – response is optional □ Other deadline (specify): FSC-US Forest Management Standard (V1-0), Indicated People who are subject to direct adverse effects of mare apprised of relevant activities in advance of the activities in advance activities in advance of the activities in a		

The procedure clarifies the roles and responsibilities of staff from the Divisions of Fish and Wildlife, Forestry, and Ecological and Water Resources during each step of forest management on lands administered by the Division of Fish and Wildlife. Lands affected by the procuredure include Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs), Aquatic Management Areas (AMAs), and Land Utilization Project (LUP) lands.

Once implemented, the procedure, which supplements the existing Interdisciplinary Forest Management Coordination Framework, will be essential to forestry planning and management on these lands and should help to promote collaborative relationships within the DNR and with external stakeholders. The draft procedure is presently being reviewed by the US Fish and Wildlife Service, which leases LUP lands to the FME.

□ Non-Conformity Corrective Action Request ☑ Observation; no Corrective Action is required Conformance with Indicator 4.4.c would be strengethed if the Forest Management on Lands Administered by the Fish and Wildlife Division procedure were approved and implemented in a timely fashion. Additionally, once the procedure is approved, the FME is encouraged to inform relevant external stakeholders about the new procedure and convey the benefits to forestry planning and management that occurs on Division of Fish and Widlife managed lands.

any evidence submitted)	FME response (including	
	any evidence submitted)	

SCS review	
Status of CAR:	
	Upgraded to Major
	Other decision (refer to description above)

5. Stakeholder Comments

In accordance with SCS protocols, consultation with key stakeholders is an integral component of the evaluation process. Stakeholder consultation takes place prior to, concurrent with, and following field evaluations. Distinct purposes of such consultation include:

- To solicit input from affected parties as to the strengths and weaknesses of the FME's management, relative to the standard, and the nature of the interaction between the FME and the surrounding communities.
- To solicit input on whether the forest management operation has consulted with stakeholders regarding identifying any high conservation value forests (HCVFs).

Stakeholder consultation activities are organized to give participants the opportunity to provide comments according to general categories of interest based on the three FSC chambers, as well as the SCS Interim Standard, if one was used.

5.1 Stakeholder Groups Consulted

Principal stakeholder groups are identified based upon results from past evaluations, lists of stakeholders from the FME under evaluation, and additional stakeholder contacts from other sources. Stakeholder groups who are consulted as part of the evaluation include FME management and staff,

consulting foresters, contractors, lease holders, adjacent property owners, local and regionally-based social interest and civic organizations, purchasers of logs harvested on FME forestlands, recreational user groups, tribal members and/or representatives, members of the FSC National Initiative, members of the regional FSC working group, FSC International, local and regionally-based environmental organizations and conservationists, and forest industry groups and organizations, as well as local, state, and federal regulatory agency personnel and other relevant groups.

5.2 Summary of Stakeholder Comments and Evaluation Team Responses

The table below summarizes the comments falling within scope of the standard received from stakeholders and the assessment team's response. Where a stakeholder comment has triggered a subsequent investigation during the evaluation, the corresponding follow-up action and conclusions from SCS are noted below.

□ FME has not received any stakeholder comments from interested parties as a result of stakeholder outreach activities during this annual evaluation.

Summary of Outreach Activities Conducted (Check all that apply):

 \boxtimes Face to face meetings

🛛 Phone calls

🛛 Email, or letter

 \Box Notice published in the national and/or local press

 \Box Notice published on relevant websites

□ Local radio announcements

□ Local customary notice boards

□ Social media broadcast

Stakeholder Comment (paraphrased)	SCS Response
Climate change:	Site visits and review of documentation, including
Stakeholder stated, "DNR forest management	forest management planning documents, verify
fails to demonstrate either plans or	that the MN DNR considers climate change
implementation to mitigate climate change via	mitigation and adaptation in its management
sufficient carbon sequestration and storage."	system. The MN DNR has resources to address
	adaptation plans for forestry, wildlife, habitat,
	tree species, and other relevant aspects.
	Additionally, mitigation efforts are addressed and
	documented within resource plans and policies,
	as observed by the audit team. Membership
	within cooperatives that include federal agencies
	and other state natural resource departments
	confirm regional and landscape-level efforts are
	being assessed for impacts and mitigation
	opportunities.
	Examples from the 2022 FSC Forest Management
	surveillance evaluation site visits include the
	Climate Adaptation Site in the Tower Area in
	which burr oak was planted at a test site as a

	pilot for assisted migration to assess the survival,
	vigor, and competition of the burr oak with
	native vegetation. In addition, at Permit 36-64-21
	#293. NP12. also in the Tower area. review of the
	silviculture and other management activities at a
	red nine and white spruce stand, climate change
	recommendations for species diversity and long-
	lived conifers were met through the management
	observed Likewise at a The Nature Conservancy
	(TNC) Riparian Management Zone (RMZ) Gan
	Project on the Bantism River Aquatic
	Management Area (AMA) mitigating the effects
	of climate change on cold water ficheries, such as
	brock trout was an importus for the ringrian
	restoration project: the project involved planting
	of white pine, white spruce, and other long lived
	charge for aquatic babitat onbancoment. Other
	species for aquatic habitat enhancement. Other
	undertaken by the state which include projects
	involving DNR forest management planning can
	he found on the state's website here
	be found on the state's website here.
	While the ESC standards don't have specific
	requirements for climate change-driven
	mitigation adaptation and carbon sequestration
	review of documents and interviews with
	forestors and other MN DNP personnal
	confirmed that climate change is considered
	when developing site level plans for maintaining
	or ophaneing species composition and
	distribution, thereby demonstrating syldence of
	distribution, thereby demonstrating evidence of
	conformance to indicator 6.3.4.1. That indicator
	requires, in part, that the forest owner or
	manager maintains, ennances, and/or restores
	under-represented successional stages in the
	FIND that would naturally occur on the types of
Forestry on LUP lands:	The corrective action Finding 2010 2 was issued
Stakeholder stated SCS's ESC audit Einding 2010.2	during the 2019 ESC Forest Management
was closed prematurally specifically "the closure	surveillance evaluation because the audit team
of this Minor CAR hinged on that the Eich and	found that the local LIS Fish & Wildlife Service
Wildlife Service (EWS) submitted a nilot proposal	refuge managers (LISEWS) were not adequately
and they were working on collaborating with the	consulted regarding during the stand solartion
DNR on a response. The EWS proposal was not	phase of the STHI about the management of the
discussed with the EW/S until earlier this year "	Land Hillization Project (HD) lands HD lands are
uiscussed with the rws diffiered file this year.	lossed by the EME from USEW/S nor the terms of
	Amondmont 8 to Lagra Datugan United States of
	American and the State of Mineresta (5.1, 2000)
	America and the State of Winnesota (Feb 2009).

The finding required that the MIN DNR comply with Indicator 44.c, which requires that people who are subject to direct adverse effects of management operations shall be apprised of relevant activities in advance of the action so that they may express concern. In that case, the USFW is considered a distinct stakeholder regarding the management of LUP lands. The finding did not specify the method by which the MN DNR needed to consult with the USFWS.
During the 2020 FSC Forest Management surveillance evaluation, the audit team found that the MN DNR had initiated a series of meetings with the USFWS to discuss the preferred process for consultation regarding future habitat management on LUP lands. At the time of the audit, the first such meeting had already occurred, in August 2020, with the Area, Region, and Central Office Fish and Wildlife division staff and USFWS staff. The non- conformance is closed in 2020 based on the evidence reviewed and interviews conducted during the evaluation. Additionally, new timber harvesting on the LUP lands had been put on hold, and continues to be on hold, while the MN DNR engaged with the USFWS to determine appropriate sites for future harvests.
The 2022 FSC audit team read the meeting minutes from a February 2022 meeting between the MN DNR and the USFWS to discuss the LUP land situation. SCS understands that there continues to be dialogue and consultation between the two entities, which demonstrates progress in the negotiation. However, the audit team believes that the negotiation would benefit, and conformance with Indicator 4.4.c would therefore be improved, if a draft procedure that clarifies the roles and responsibilities of staff from the Divisions of Fish and Wildlife, Forestry, and Ecological and Water Resources during each step of forest management on lands administered by the Division of Fish and Wildlife, were finalized and communicated to stakeholders. The draft procedure is presently being reviewed by the US Fish and Wildlife Service. See Finding 2022.1 .

Forestry on WMAs & AMAs:

Stakeholder stated, "the number and type (species) of forested stands listed for harvest are pre-set by a statewide system (STHI) and do not originate from any fish and wildlife planning."

Stakeholder stated, "DNR is favoring short-term timber production [over] long-term habitat preservation and enhancement" on these lands.

Stakeholder stated, "DNR has ignored the intent of these lands [WMAs and AMAs], and instead of managing for recreation and improved wildlife habitat, they are being managed as you would Forestry lands, using the concepts of 'multiple use.' These are not multiple use lands, they are dedicated for wildlife habitat and recreation, not cords and boards."

Stakeholder stated, "Setting cord targets on lands set aside for fish and wildlife that are not tied to established, well defined wildlife goals and benefits is unprecedented, concerning, and should be rejected. It certainly does not comply with the FSC's sustainability standards."

During the 2019 FSC Forest Management surveillance evaluation, SCS issued an Observation (Finding 2019.1) to the MN DNR for potentially not adequately seeking and considered input into management planning from its FAW managers about timber harvest areas on WMAs. The audit team at the time concluded that there was an opportunity to improve the manner in which FAW staff input is incorporated into the STHI. The MN DNR also issued an OFI during its internal audit for this issue. In response, the DNR developed an interdisciplinary working group that undertook several projects to improve communication within the department with respect to forest management planning and the implementation of the STHI on WMAs, and the FSC finding was closed during the 2020 surveillance evaluation.

During the 2022 FSC Forest Management surveillance evaluation, many personnel stated that interdisciplinary collaboration has been improving. This was supported through numerous examples of collaborative decisionmaking among FOR, FAW, and EWR personnel on forest management planning and related projects observed by the auditors. Additionally, all harvests reviewed during the 2022 FSC audit, including those on WMAs and AMAs, included clear mitigations intended to benefit wildlife such a retention of conifer thermal cover for deer and moose and downed woody debris for lynx, among others.

During the 2022 FSC audit, MN DNR personnel explained that WMAs are not managed to generate revenue. They said that WMA timber sales often have more logging restrictions, higher levels of reserves longer rotation ages, and often thinnings instead of final harvests, which results in less efficient operations for a logger and reduces logger bidding activity. Additionally, much of the timber harvested from WMAs comes from aspen stands, which is typically offered at significantly lower price to entice operators to bid on those sales. Review of permits and site visits to harvest units during the 2022 FSC audit confirm these statements.

Analysis of timber harvest revenue data from WMAs and AMAs since 2010 also supports the statements of MN DNR personnel. Per below, revenue from WMAs and AMAs is a small fraction of the total MN DNR timber revenue, reflecting the lower value and volume of sales that occur on WMAs and AMAs and the wildlife habitat focus for management on those lands.

Fiscal Year	WMA-AMA Revenue	All DNR Timber Revenue	% of Revenue
2010	884,684	18,945,788	4.7%
2011	459,318	19,654,371	2.3%
2012	658,215	17,099,716	3.8%
2013	703,421	15,797,135	4.5%
2014	792,335	18,982,497	4.2%
2015	564,165	22,521,408	2.5%
2016	648,454	22,005,706	2.9%
2017	346,849	20,412,161	1.7%
2018	790,688	21,498,651	3.7%
2019	661,471	23,890,449	2.8%
2020	438,817	20,394,588	2.2%
2021	344,707	20,994,640	1.6%
2022	545,174	22,029,026	2.5%

The continued implementation the STH decisions through the MN DNR's 10-year stand exam list, including for stands located on WMAs and AMAs, demonstrates conformance with Indicator 6.3.a.1, which requires that the forest owner or manager maintains, enhances, and/or restores under-represented successional stages in the FMU that would naturally occur on the types of sites found on the FMU. As explained by the MN DNR in written communication to the 2022 FSC audit team, "This 'spatial plan' was built on modeling decisions to address multiple values, including managing Wildlife Management Areas and Special Management Areas under differing regimes designed to specifically benefit wildlife habitat and foster forest characteristics that address diverse forest composition patterns and conditions. In addition, modeling intentionally planned to maintain an amount of older aspen on MN DNR managed lands for wildlife habitat.

	Implementation of the 10-year stand exam list (spatial plan), starting with the FY21 annual stand exam list, thus ensures that these values are
Baptism River AMA timber sale: Stakeholder expressed concern about retained patch sizes, level of regeneration, and width of RMZ buffer on a completed clearcut harvest.	At the TNC RMZ Gap Project audit site visit on the Baptism AMA during the 2022 FSC Forest Management surveillance evaluation, the retained patch sizes, regeneration levels, and RMZ buffer were reviewed (Permit X014959). Following the field audit, the audit team also reviewed aerial photos from the site.
	Reviews of aerial photos, and as verified on the ground, patches and other retention were found to meet the Minnesota Forest Management Guidelines for 5% retention between clumps and the RMZ.
	The regeneration plan for the permit was to be natural regeneration of aspen, while increasing the conifer component through aerial seeding. The permit closed in 2016, and according to records was seeded in fall 2017. Per MN DNR protocols, the 5-year regeneration survey will be conducted this year, although the FSC audit team observed natural regeneration with a variety of species and had no concerns about regeneration levels.
	The FSC onsite visit, corroborated by measurements taken from aerial photos, found that the RMZ width met the current requirement for an average distance of 165 feet from the water's edge to the harvested area for designated trout streams. The topography of the RMZ is quite steep, and while some areas were narrower than would have been preferrable in order to clean up a bug-killed stand, the RMZ still met the 165-foot average width as required by state guidelines. As verified through interviews and review of written communications, the forester and fisheries property manager had worked together to arrive at this site's RMZ; they are working together to include slope in the RMZ width on trout streams in the guidelines and have submitted written comments to the Minnesota Forest Resources Council committee that is currently revising the state's BMP guidelines

	Additionally, after the harvest took place in 2016, the MN DNR has approved a Lake County Landscape Management Opportunity Area. The Lake County Landscape MOA provides a unique opportunity for Fisheries supervisors to define the RMZ on trout streams whereas RMZ on trout streams outside the MOA are set using the MFRC BMPs and/or with coordination with the Area Fisheries supervisor.
	All site visits to harvests during the FSC audit were found to conform with RMZ buffer width guidelines, thereby providing evidence of conformance with Indicator 6.3.c, which requires that management maintains, enhances and/or restores the plant and wildlife habitat of Riparian Management Zones.
AMA planned harvest levels: Stakeholder stated, "90% of AMA Lands on Trout and Steelhead Rivers Will be Harvested1.3 % of the harvest pool in the North Shore forest planning area amounts to 7,260 acres of the 8,017 acres of Lake County AMAs, which is 90% of the AMA parcels along premier trout and steelhead rivers in Lake County, including the Split Rock, Beaver, Baptism and Manitou."	Review of the 10-year Sustainable Timber Harvest Analysis (STHA) planning process data, and interviews with MN DNR personnel, reveal that 7,874 acres in the AMAs in Lake County are in the forest inventory. Of that, 97% (7,668 acres) harvest is not restricted by policy or statute; 83% (6,540 acres) is designated as having site conditions capable of producing mature trees; and 24% (1,882 acres) is planned for examination during the FY2021-2030 planning period.
	Under the STHA planning process, each stand in the 1,882-acre pool that is identified on the annual stand exam list is reviewed by forestry and fisheries staff to determine what, if any, management actions may be taken. This occurs after internal and external comment periods on the stand exam list. Any harvest action that may be prescribed for the stand is developed by DNR staff and must meet forest management guidelines.
	Under the current process for offering permits for sale on MN DNR managed land, including AMAs, only a portion of prescribed harvests ever occur because of local market conditions. For example, only one appraisal from FY21 and FY22 was sold on the AMAs in Lake County; the permit was a 16-acre northern hardwood shelterwood harvest with reserves.

Given the planning process, MN DNR forestry and fisheries personnel reviews of stands identified for potential harvest, and local market conditions, it is unlikely that much of the 1,882 acres examined in the FY21-2030 planning period will be harvested. Additionally, as stated earlier, Minnesota Forest Management Guidelines (RMZs, retention levels, etc.) must be followed for these harvests, in addition, the Lake County Landscape MOA provides a unique opportunity for Fisheries supervisors to define the RMZ on trout streams whereas RMZ on trout streams outside the MOA are set using the MFRC BMPs and/or with coordination with the Area Fisheries supervisor.
The Minnesota Forest Management Guidelines, supplemented by the Lake County Management Opportunity Area, is evidence of conformance with Indicator 6.5.e.1. The indicator requires that, in consultation with appropriate expertise, the forest owner or manager implements written Streamside Management Zone (SMZ) buffer management guidelines that are adequate for preventing environmental impact, and include protecting and restoring water quality, hydrologic conditions in rivers and stream corridors, wetlands, vernal pools, seeps and springs, lake and pond shorelines, and other hydrologically sensitive areas; the guidelines must include vegetative buffer widths and protection measures that are acceptable within those buffers. All site visits to harvests during the FSC audit were found to conform with the state's BMZ buffer width guidelines

6. Certification Decision

The certificate holder has demonstrated continued overall conformance to the applicable Forest Stewardship Council standards. The SCS annual evaluation team recommends that the certificate be sustained, subject to subsequent annual evaluations and the FME's response to any open CARs.	Yes 🛛 No 🗆
Comments:	

7. Annual Data Update

□ No changes since previous evaluation.

☑ Information in the following sections has changed since previous evaluation.		
Name and Contact Information	☑ Pesticide and Other Chemical Use	
FSC Sales Information	Production Forests	
□ Scope of Certificate	□ FSC Product Classification	
Non-SLIME EMUs	□ Conservation & High Conservation Value Areas	
Social Information	□ Areas Outside of the Scope of Certification	

Name and Contact Information

Organization name	Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, SCS-FM/COC-00088N			
Contact person	Tim Beyer, Forest Certification Program Consultant			
Address	500 Lafayette RoadTelephone(651) 259-5256			
	St Paul, MN 551554040	Fax		
	USA	e-mail	Tim.Beyer@state.mn.us	
		Website	Minnesota DNR Website	

FSC Sales Information

 \boxtimes FSC Sales contact information same as above.

Scope of Certificate

Certificate type		⊠ Single	e FMU	□м	ultiple FMU
		Group			
SLIMF if applicable		□ Small certificat	SLIMF te	□ Lo certii	ow intensity SLIMF ficate
		🗆 Group	o SLIMF certifi	cate	
# Group Members (if app	olicable)	NA			
Number of FMU's in sco	pe of certificate	1			
Geographic location of n	on-SLIMF FMU(s)	Latitude:	: 93 degrees 0	5 minut	es W
		Longitud	le: 44 degrees	57 minu	ites N
Forest zone		🗆 Boreal 🛛 Temperate		perate	
		Subtropical Tropical		ical	
Total forest area in scop	Total forest area in scope of certificate which is: Units: \Box ha or \boxtimes ac			s: 🗆 ha or 🗵 ac	
privately manage	ed	0			
state managed		4,997,38	83		
community mana	aged	0			
Number of FMUs in scope that are:					
less than 100 ha in area	0	100 - 1000 ha in area 0			0
1000 - 10 000 ha in	0	more than 10 000 ha in area 1		1	
area					
Total forest area in scope of certificate which is included in FMUs that: Units: \Box ha or $oxtimes$ ac					
are less than 100 ha in ar	ea	0			

are between 100 ha and 1000 ha in area	0	
meet the eligibility criteria as low intensity SLIMF	0	
FMUs		
Division of FMUs into manageable units:		
Minnesota DNR develops forest resource management plans using the section level of its ecological		
classification system rather than administrative areas. Seven Section Forest Resource Management		
Plans (SFRMP) cover DNR-administered forest lands. Forest management is managed across three		
Administrative Regions and 15 Forestry Areas.		

Non-SLIMF FMUs (Group or Multiple FMU Certificates)

Name	Contact information	Latitude/ longitude of Non-SLIMF FMUs	
NA	NA	NA	NA

Social Information

Number of forest workers (including contractors) working in forest within scope of certificate			
(differentiated by gender):			
male workers: 817	817 female workers: 193		
Number of accidents in forest work since previous	Serious: NA Fatal: NA		
evaluation: 36			

Pesticide and Other Chemical Use

Commercial	Active	Quantity applied since	Total area treated	Reason for use
name of	ingredient	previous evaluation (kg	since previous	
pesticide /		or lbs.)	evaluation (ac)	
herbicide				
Accord XRT	Glyphosate	281.1 gal	784.5	Site Prep
Activator 90	NA	25.0 gal	158.9	Invasives
Bark Oil Blue	Aliphatic oil	52.7 gal	25.0	Invasives
	NA			Invasives,
				Release, Site
Choice		24.0 gal	603.3	Prep
Chopper	Imazapyr	24.8 gal	158.5	Site Prep
Element 4	Triclopyr	15.1 gal	33.0	Invasives
	Metsulfuron			
Escort XP	methyl	24.7 lbs (dry)	281.9	Invasives
Garlon 3A	Triclopyr	31.0 gal	4.6	Invasives
Garlon 3A	Triclopyr	3.8 gal	6.0	Site Prep
	Triclopyr			Invasives,
Garlon 4,				Release, Site
Ultra, XRT		260.4 gal	1101.5	Prep, Release
	NA			Invasives, Site
Liberate		22.6 gal	860.1	Prep
Milestone	Aminopyralid	8.8 gal	176.4	Invasives
	Metsulfuron			
Opensight	methyl	2.6 gal	154.5	Invasives

	Metsulfuron			
Opensight	methyl	0.6 gal	80.3	Invasives
	Sulfometuron			
Oust XP	methyl	14.0lbs (dry)	223.6	Site Prep
Pathfinder II	Triclopyr	1.7 gal	97.5	Invasives
	NA			Release, Site
Penetron		15.3 gal	158.2	Prep
Plantskydd	NA	2.0 lbs (dry)	3.2	Invasives
	Glyphosate			Invasives,
				Release, Site
Rodeo		33.6 gal	56.3	Prep
	Glyphosate			Release,
Roundup				Invasives, Site
Custom, Pro		225.5 gal	353.0	Prep
	Clopralid			Invasives,
				Release, Site
Transline		10.0 gal	121.0	Prep
Triclopyr 4E	Triclopyr	3.2 gal	57.0	Invasives

Production Forests

Timber Forest Products	
Total area of production forest (i.e. forest from which timber may be	2,800,000 acres
harvested)	
Area of production forest classified as 'plantation'	0
Area of production forest regenerated primarily by replanting or by a	1,075,000 acres
combination of replanting and coppicing of the planted stems	
Area of production forest regenerated primarily by natural	1,725,000 acres
regeneration, or by a combination of natural regeneration and	
coppicing of the naturally regenerated stems	

Silvicultural system(s) and area under type of management				
Even-aged management	2,412,600 acres			
Clearcut	2,051,500 acres			
Shelterwood	103,700 acres			
Other:	257,400 acres			
Uneven-aged management	252,300 acres			
Individual tree selection	5,100 acres			
Group selection				
Other:				
Other (e.g. nursery, recreation area, windbreak, bamboo, silvo- pastoral system, agro-forestry system, etc.)				

Non-timber Forest Products (NTFPs)
Area of forest protected from commercial harvesting of timber and	2,209,183 acres
managed primarily for the production of NTFPs or services	
Other areas managed for NTFPs or services	0
Approximate annual commercial production of non-timber forest	FY 2022: 3481 cord
products included in the scope of the certificate, by product type	equivalents

Species in scope of joint FM/COC certificate: Scientific/ Latin Name (Common/ Trade Name) Conifers Pinaceae (pine family) • Eastern White Pine Pinus strobus • Red Pine or Norway Pine Pinus resinosa Jack Pine Pinus banksiana • **Black Spruce** *Picea mariana* • White Spruce Picea glauca Tamarack Larch Larix laricina • Balsam Fir Abies balsamea • Eastern Hemlock Tsuga canadensis • Cupressaceae (cypress family) Eastern Arborvitae Thuja occidentalis Eastern Juniper Juniperus virginiana Hardwoods Salicaceae (willow family) • **Quaking Aspen** Populus tremuloides • **Big-tooth Aspen Populus grandidentata** • Ontario Balsam Poplar Populus balsamifera Eastern Cottonwood Populus deltoides Black Willow Salix nigra • Peachleaf Willow Salix amygdaloides • Juglandaceae (walnut family) Black Walnut Juglans nigra • **Butternut** Juglans cinerea ٠ • Shagbark Hickory Carya ovata **Bitternut Hickory Carya cordiformis** • Betulaceae (birch family) Paper Birch Betula papyrifera • Yellow Birch Betula alleghaniensis • River Birch Betula nigra American Hornbeam Carpinus caroliniana • Ironwood Ostrya virginiana • Fagaceae (beech family) White oak Quercus alba Bur oak Quercus macrocarpa Swamp white oak Quercus bicolor Chestnut oak Quercus prinus

- Chinkapin oak Quercus muhlenbergii
- Cottonwood " Populus Deltoides var. occidentalis'
- Northern red oak Quercus rubra

- Black oak Quercus velutina
- Northern pin oak Quercus ellipsoidalis
- Ulmaceae (elm family)
 - <u>Hackberry</u> Celtis occidentalis
 - American Elm Ulmus americana
 - Slippery Elm Ulmus rubra
 - Rock Elm Ulmus thomasii
- Moraceae (mulberry family)
 - <u>Red Mulberry</u> Morus rubra
- Rosaceae (rose family)
 - American mountain ash Sorbus americana
 - Black Cherry Prunus serotina
 - <u>Pin cherry</u> Prunus pensylvanica
- Fabaceae (pea family)
 - Honey locust Gleditsia triacanthos
 - Kentucky coffeetree Gymnocladus dioicus
- Sapindaceae (soapberry family)
 - <u>Sugar Maple</u> Acer saccharum
 - Black Maple Acer nigrum
 - <u>Silver Maple</u> Acer saccharinum
 - Red Maple Acer rubrum
 - Boxelder Acer negundo
- Malvaceae (mallow family)
 - <u>Basswood</u> Tilia americana
- Oleaceae (olive family)
 - White Ash Fraxinus americana
 - <u>Black Ash</u> Fraxinus nigra
 - Green Ash (also "Red Ash") Fraxinus pennsylvanica

Credit: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List of Minnesota trees (Accessed Oct 5, 2015)

FSC Product Classification

Timber products

Product Level 1	Product Level 2	Species
W1 Rough Wood	W1.1 Roundwood	See "Species in Scope Above"
W1 Rough Wood	W1.2 Fuel Wood	See "Species in Scope Above"
W3 Wood in Chips or particles.	W3.1	See "Species in Scope Above"

Non-Timber Forest Products

Product Level 1	Product Level 2	Product Level 3 and Species
NA	NA	NA

Conservation and High Conservation Value Areas

Conservation Area	
Total amount of land in certified area protected from commercial harvesting	
of timber and managed primarily for conservation objectives (includes both	2,197,383 acres
forested and non-forested lands).*	

*Note: Total conservation and HCV areas may differ since these may serve different functions in the FME's management system. Designation as HCV may allow for active management, including commercial harvest. Conservation areas are typically under passive management, but may undergo invasive species control, prescribed burns, non-commercial harvest, and other management activities intended to maintain or enhance their integrity. In all cases, figures are reported by the FME as it pertains local laws & regulations, management objectives, and FSC requirements.

High Conservation Value Forest / Areas

Code	НСV Туре	Description & Location	Area
HCV1	Forests or areas containing globally,	HCV 1-3 Statewide.	262,626 acres
	regionally or nationally significant	Shapefile available by	for HCV's 1-3
	concentrations of biodiversity values (e.g.	request.	
	endemism, endangered species, refugia).		
HCV2	Forests or areas containing globally,	Notes:	
	regionally or nationally significant large	1 - Most HCVFs are not	
	landscape level forests, contained within, or	protected from timber	
	containing the management unit, where	harvesting, and harvesting	
	viable populations of most if not all naturally	may be necessary to	
	occurring species exist in natural patterns of	maintain/enhance the HCVs.	
	distribution and abundance.	Many are MCBS High or	
HCV3	Forests or areas that are in or contain rare,	Outstanding sites.	
	threatened or endangered ecosystems.	2 - There are 35,319 acres of	
		designated current or future	
		old growth that are not	
		currently part of the above	
		number. These stands are	
	Forests or proper that provide basis convises of	Manageu passivery.	
HCV4	Porests of areas that provide basic services of	NOLES:	1210 20100
	nature in critical situations (e.g. watershed	1 - These are addressed	1310 acres
		nolicios / procedures In	
		many situations, timber	
		harvesting is compatible	
		with the HCVs	
		2 - These acres still heing	
		refined	
HCV5	Forests or areas fundamental to meeting	-	0
	basic needs of local communities (e.g.		-
	subsistence, health).		

HCV6	Forests or areas critical to local communities'	-	0
	traditional cultural identity (areas of cultural,		
	ecological, economic or religious significance		
	identified in cooperation with such local		
	communities).		

	Total area of forest classified as 'High Conservation Value Forest / Area'	263,936 acres
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Areas Outside of the Scope of Certification (Partial Certification and Excision)

□ N/A – All forestland owned or managed by the applicant is included in the scope.				
Applicant owns and/or manages other FMUs not under evaluation.				
Applicant wishes to excise portions of the FMU(s) under evaluation from the scope of certification.				
Explanation for exclusion of State Parks and Scientific and Natural Areas are intentionally				
FMUs and/or excision:	scoped out of the FSC certificate, but they are managed primaril			
	for long term conservation values. Agriculture lands, and power			
	and gas line lease areas are excised from the certificate, as they			
are not managed for timber production.				
Control measures to prevent	Certified timber sales are advertised and sold as certified in			
mixing of certified and non-	contracts. The audit reviewed non-certified timber sale contracts			
certified product (C8.3):	managed by the FME in order to confirm that these sales did not			
	carry a certified claim.			

SECTION B – APPENDICES (CONFIDENTIAL)

Appendix 1 – List of FMUs Selected for Evaluation

⊠ FME consists of a single FMU

□ FME consists of multiple FMUs or is a Group

Appendix 2 – Staff and Stakeholders Consulted

List of FME Staff Consulted

To protect privacy, only FME staff who have expressly provided written permission are listed. **These** records are retained by SCS and subject to FSC or ASI examination.

Name	Title	Contact Information	Consultation method
Tim Beyer	Forest Certification Program Consultant	Tim.beyer@state.mn.us	In person, virtual meetings, phone

Ted Dick	Forest Wildlife Habitat Supervisor	-	In person
Jon Drimel	Timber Program Supervisor &	-	In person, virtual
	Forest Certification Implementation		meetings, phone
	Team (FCIT)		
Emily Peters	Forest Ecology and Policy Program	-	In person
	Consultant		
Barb Naramore	Deputy Commissioner	-	Virtual
Shannon	Assistant Commissioner	-	Virtual
Lotthammer			
Jess Richards	Assistant Commissioner	-	IVirtual
Shelly Patten	Northeast Regional Director – R2	-	In person and virtual
Lonnie Lilly	Forestry Regional Manager – R2	-	In person and virtual
Lindsey Shartell	Regional Wildlife Manager -R2	-	In person and virtual
	(Acting)		
Angela Aarhus-Ward	Assistant Regional Wildlife Manager	-	Virtual
	– R2		
Darrell Schindler	Regional EWR Manager – R2	-	Virtual
Greg Root	Assistant Regional EWR Manager –	-	Virtual
	R2		
Bradley Harrington	Director of Tribal Relations	-	Virtual
Patty Thielen	Director – Forestry Division (FOR)	-	Virtual
Dave Olfelt Director – Fish and Wildlife Division		-	Virtual
(FAW)			
Katie Smith	Director – Ecological and Water	-	Virtual
Resources Division (EWR)			
Doug Tillma	Section Manager - Forestry	-	Virtual
	Planning and Policy (FOR) &		
Certification Oversight Team (COT)			
Kelly Straka	Section Manager – Wildlife (FAW) &	-	Virtual
	СОТ		
Jan Shaw Wolff	Section Manager – Ecosystem	-	Virtual
	Management and Protection (EWR)		
	& COT		
Andrew Arends	Section Manager – State Forest	-	Virtual
	Lands (FOR)		
Aaron VandeLinde	Director, Office of School Trust	-	Virtual
Lands (non-DNR staff)			
Lacy Levine	Forest Policy Analyst & FCIT	-	Virtual
Lori Knosalla Timber Sales Administration		-	Virtual
	Coordinator & FCIT		
Tim Quincer	Forest Wildlife Habitat Specialist	-	Virtual
	(FAW) & FCIT		
Paul Dubuque	Forestry Silviculture Consultant &	-	Virtual
	FCIT		
David Wilson	Site Level Guidelines Monitoring	-	Virtual
	Consultant & FCIT		
Nick Jensen	NW Regional Ecologist & FCIT	-	Virtual
Tavis Westbrook	Resource Program Coordinator	-	Virtual
	(Parks & Trails) & FCIT		
Aaron Mielke	Two Harbors (TH) Area Assistant	-	In person
	Area Forester		

Jason Bushmaker	on Bushmaker Two Harbors Timber Program		In person
Arrelleruth	Forester		
Anna Heruth	Two Harbors Silviculture Program	-	in person
Class Distance	Forester (TU)		
Gien Ristow	Forester (TH)	-	In person
Brian Schiller	Forest Technician (TH)	-	In person
Simon Cain	Forester (TH)	-	In person
Trevor Poyhonen	Good Neighbor Authority Program	-	In person
	Forester (TH)		
Nancy Hansen	Two Harbors Area Wildlife Manager	-	In person
Bailey Petersen	Two Harbors Assistant Area Wildlife	-	In person
	Manager		
Dawn Plattner	Two Harbors Assistant Area Wildlife	-	In person
	Manager		
Sarah Pennington	Aquatic Management Area Habitat	-	In person
	Specialist		
Heather Baird	Forest Fisheries Landscape	-	In person
Coordinator			
Brooke Haworth	EWR Regional Plant Ecologist – R2	-	In person
Gaea Crozier	EWR Non-Game Specialist – R2	-	In person
Cory Holden	Holden Logging, LLC-Owner	-	In person
Brian Feldt	Tower (T) Area Forest Supervisor	-	In person
Dave Sopoci Tower Area Assistant Area		-	In person
	Supervisor		
Krista Roth	Tower Area Timber Program	-	In person
	Forester		
Terry Bergstrom	Forest Technician (retired)	-	In person
Penny Backman	Tower Assistant Area Wildlife	-	In person
	Manager		
Nate Eiding	Hibbing (H) Area Assistant	-	In person
0	Supervisor		
Kirby Budrow	Hibbing Area Timber Program	-	In person
-,	Forester		
Ion Splinter	Hibbing Area Silviculture Area	-	In person
	Forester		
Andv Carlson	Forester (H)	-	In person
Jeff Siriord	Forest Technician (H)	_	In person
Jess Holmes	Tower Area Wildlife Manager	_	In person
3033 11011103	i on ci / i cu minine munugel		in person

List of other Stakeholders Consulted*

To protect privacy, only stakeholders who have expressly provided written permission are listed. These records are retained by SCS and subject to FSC or ASI examination.

Name	Title	Contact Information	Consultation method	Requests Stakeholder Notification? (Y/N)
Cory Holden	Owner, Holden Logging, LLC	-	In person	Ν

Terry Bergstrom	Retired MN DNR Forest	-	In person	N
	Technician			
Sierra Club North	Various	Retained in SCS records	Written	Y
Star Chapter				
Gretchen Mehmel	Retired MN	gmehmel@wiktel.com	Written, phone	Y
	DNR Wildlife			
	Manager			
Craig Sterle	WMA	csterle777@gmail.com	Written	Y
	Stewardship			
	Network			
Steve Thorne	Retired DNR	jbsmsteve@aol.com	Written	Y
	Deputy			
	Commissioner,			
	1978-1990			
Minnesota Trout	Various	Retained in SCS records	Written	Y
Unlimited				
Bruce Anderson	President,	bdandersons1953@outlo	Written	Y
	Minnesota	<u>ok.com</u>		
	Chapter of The			
	Wildlife Society			
Shannon Geshick	Executive	shannon.geshick@state.	Phone	Y
	Director,	mn.us		
	Minnesota			
	Indian Affairs			
	Council			

* Note: SCS may maintain additional records of stakeholder consultation activities (e.g., email notifications) in its recordkeeping system. Anonymous stakeholders may have provided comments as a part of stakeholder outreach activities, such communications are retained by SCS subject to FSC and ASI examination.

Appendix 3 – Additional Evaluation Techniques Employed

Additional techniques employed (*describe*):

Appendix 4 – Required Tracking

Pesticide Derogations

Ithere are no active pesticide derogations for this FME.

Progressive HCVF Assessments

Image: FME does not use partial or progressive HCVF assessments

[⊠] None.

Special Instructions or Scoping Notes for Next Regularly Scheduled Annual Audit

\boxtimes	Not applicable; no significant issues identified that may impact the next audit.		
Some	Some issues were identified during this audit that the next audit team could consider in the next audit,		
such a	S:		
	Scope of certificate:		
	Audit sampling:		
	Audit time:		
	Audit season:		
	Travel time between sites or FMUs:		
	Audit frequency:		
	Suggested audit team competency for next audit:		
	Suggested requirements to include during the next audit:		
	Suggested issues investigate during the next audit:		
	Suggested sites for inspection:		
	Stakeholders to be consulted:		
	Other(s) – please describe:		

Appendix 5 – Forest Management Standard Conformance Table

Criteria required by FSC at every surveillance evaluation (check all situations that apply)	\Box NA – all FMUs are exempt from these requirements.			
	Plantations > 10,000 ha (24,710 ac): 2.3, 4.2, 4.4, 6.7, 6.9, 10.6, 10.7, and 10.8			
	☑ Natural forests > 50,000 ha (123,553 ac) ('low intensity' SLIMFs exempt): 1.5, 2.3, 3.2, 4.2, 4.4, 5.6, 6.2, 6.3, 8.2, and 9.4			
	☑ FMUs containing High Conservation Values ('small forest' SLIMFs exempt): 6.2, 6.3, 6.9 and 9.4			
Documents and records reviewed for FMUs/ sites sampled	\Box All applicable documents and records as required in section 7 of audit plan were reviewed; or			
	□ The following documents and records as required in section 7 of the audit plan were NOT reviewed (<i>provide explanation</i>):			

Requirements Reviewed in Annual Evaluation

Evaluation Year	FSC P&C Reviewed
2021	All – (Re)certification Evaluation

2022	FSC-US FM Standard Principle 7, Principle 8, and Criterion 1.5, 2.3, 3.2, 4.2,
	4.4, 5.6, 6.2, 6.3, 6.5, 6.9, and 9.4; SCS COC Indicators for FMEs; and FSC
	Trademark standard.
2023	
2024	
2025	

FSC Forest Management Standard (v1.0)—United States

C= Conformance with Criterion or Indicator NC= Nonconformance with Criterion or Indicator NA = Not Applicable NE = Not Evaluated

Principle #1: Compliance with Laws and FSC Principles - Forest management shall respect all applicable laws of the country in which they occur, and international treaties and agreements to which the country is a signatory, and comply with all FSC Principles and Criteria.

1.1 Forest management shall respect all	NE	
national and local laws and administrative		
requirements.		
1.2. All applicable and legally prescribed	NE	
fees, royalties, taxes and other charges		
shall be paid.		
1.3. In signatory countries, the provisions	NE	
of all binding international agreements		
such as CITES, ILO Conventions, ITTA, and		
Convention on Biological Diversity, shall		
be respected.		
1.4. Conflicts between laws, regulations	NE	
and the FSC Principles and Criteria shall be		
evaluated for the purposes of certification,		
on a case by case basis, by the certifiers		
and the involved or affected parties.		
1.5. Forest management areas should be	С	
protected from illegal harvesting,		
settlement and other unauthorized		
activities.		
1.5.a. The forest owner or manager	С	Per interviews with staff, the DNR has law enforcement and
supports or implements measures intended		state lands staff that handle access, theft, trespass, and
to prevent illegal and unauthorized		other issues related to illegal and unauthorized activities.
activities on the Forest Management Unit		
(FMU).		State Forest rules, as well as hunting, fishing, ATV, and other
		recreation use regulations, are available to the public online.
		Additionally, as evidenced through site visits, the state lands
		sampled for the audit were well marked with signage
		describing allowed and disallowed uses. Areas have kiosks at

		parking lots and other public access points that prominently displayed the regulations and communicated other information to the public.
1.5.b. If illegal or unauthorized activities occur, the forest owner or manager implements actions designed to curtail such activities and correct the situation to the extent possible for meeting all land management objectives with consideration of available resources.	C	The MN DNR Timber Manual includes procedures for handling illegal activities such as trespass. As described in the evidence of conformance for Indicator 1.5.a, the DNR has law enforcement; those individuals are trained to handle situations of illegal or unauthorized activities and bring in other enforcement personnel as needed.
		OHV clubs are active in self-policing and try to keep their membership from riding on unauthorized trails. Observed posting of signs instructing riders to act responsibly. Efforts to block unauthorized access to OHVs, such as gates, were viewed at field sites.
		Per interviews with field staff and observations during site visits, the audit team confirmed that there are FME staff that can issue citations when unauthorized or illegal activities occur. There is also law enforcement available to conduct investigations when necessary.
		No illegal harvesting, settlement, or unauthorized activities are known to have occurred on the FMU since the last audit.
1.6. Forest managers shall demonstrate a	NE	
long-term commitment to adhere to the FSC Principles and Criteria.		

Principle #2: Long-term tenure and use rights to the land and forest resources shall be clearly defined, documented and legally established.

2.1. Clear evidence of long-term forest use	NE	
rights to the land (e.g., land title,		
customary rights, or lease agreements)		
shall be demonstrated.		
2.2. Local communities with legal or	NE	
customary tenure or use rights shall		
maintain control, to the extent necessary		
to protect their rights or resources, over		
forest operations unless they delegate		
control with free and informed consent to		
other agencies.		
2.3. Appropriate mechanisms shall be	С	
employed to resolve disputes over tenure		
claims and use rights. The circumstances		
and status of any outstanding disputes will		
be explicitly considered in the certification		
evaluation. Disputes of substantial		
magnitude involving a significant number		

of interests will normally disqualify an		
operation from being certified.		
2.3.a If <i>disputes</i> arise regarding tenure claims or use rights then the forest owner or manager initially attempts to resolve them through open communication, negotiation, and/or mediation. If these good-faith efforts fail, then federal, state, and/or local laws are employed to resolve such disputes.	C	FME staff reported that there are no new or unresolved disputes over tenure claims and use rights. As evidenced by field visits and review of maps, timber sale and property boundaries are clearly marked.
2.3.b The forest owner or manager	С	No significant disputes over tenure or use rights were
documents any significant disputes over		detected during the audit.
tenure and use rights.		

Principle #3: The legal and customary rights of indigenous peoples to own, use and manage their lands, territories, and resources shall be recognized and respected.

territories unless they delegate control with free and informed consent to other		
agencies.		
3.2. Forest management shall not threaten	С	
or diminish, either directly or indirectly,		
the resources or tenure rights of		
indigenous peoples.		
3.2.a During management planning, the forest owner or manager consults with American Indian groups that have legal rights or other binding agreements to the FMU to avoid harming their resources or rights.	C	In 2019, the MN NDR updated Operational Order 129, which covers procedures for communications, coordination, and documentation of work between DNR and Minnesota's 11 federally recognized Tribal Nations on coordinated conservation, resource protection and land management activities. The DNR provides tribes with the annual stand exam list. The department works with the 1854 Treaty Authority and the Great Lakes Fish and Wildlife Council. Minnesota Indian Affairs Council of the State of Minnesota, established in 1963, serves as a liaison between Indian tribes and the state of Minnesota. It promotes inter-governmental cooperation on fish and game regulations, forestry, mining and other natural resources and cultural issues. The MN DNR maintains a database to record contacts between staff and tribal representatives. It includes thousands of records compiled since the original 2014 Operational Order. The MN DNR has reported no known locations where

		rights of indigenous peoples in the last year. Field staff
		interviewed confirmed that there were no special sites that
		required additional protections from management activities.
		This year. MN DNR hired the state's first Director of Tribal
		Relations. The position is occupied by a tribal member. The
		director focuses on engagement (formal government-to-
		government consultation technical coordination etc.) with
		tribal governments though their elected leaders and staff
		The director and the denartment's Commissioner meet
		annually with Minnesota's tribal nations to consult on a
		range of issues that may affect their rights and resources
		Additionally, the department's regional directors meet
		regularly with tribal natural resources directors to
		regularly with theat hat draines of mutual interest
2.2 h Domonstrokla ostiona ora takan az	6	The MN DND has dedicated explosical staff to system
5.2.0 Demonstrable actions are taken so	C	The Win Dirk has dedicated archeological stall to protect
that forest management does not adversely		cultural resources. The State Archaeologist publishes an
anect tribal resources. When applicable,		annual Forest Heritage Program Report. The program
evidence of, and measures for, protecting		conducts reviews of timber sales and other division activities
tribal resources are incorporated in the		that were considered to have the potential to affect known
management plan.		or previously undocumented neritage resources. Archival
		and field research is conducted for Division of Forestry and
		Division of Fish and Wildlife projects. Archaeological sites or
		other potentially significant properties are identified.
		The Win Dink has reported no known locations where
		management activities nave affected resources or tenure
		rights of indigenous peoples in the last year. Field staff
		interviewed confirmed that there were no special sites that
		required additional protections from management activities.
		As stated in Indicator 3.2.a, this year MN DNR hired the
		state's first Director of Tribal Relations. The position is
		occupied by a tribal member. The director focuses on
		engagement (formal government-to-government
		consultation, technical coordination, etc.) with tribal
		governments though their elected leaders and staff. The
		director and the department's Commissioner meet annually
		with Minnesota's tribal nations to consult on a range of
		issues that may affect their rights and resources.
		Additionally, the department's regional directors meet
		regularly with tribal natural resources directors to
		coordinate on a range of issues of mutual interest.
3.3. Sites of special cultural, ecological,	NE	
economic or religious significance to		
indigenous peoples shall be clearly		
identified in cooperation with such		

peoples, and recognized and protected by		
forest managers.		
3.4. Indigenous peoples shall be	NE	
compensated for the application of their		
traditional knowledge regarding the use of		
forest species or management systems in		
forest operations. This compensation shall		
be formally agreed upon with their free		
and informed consent before forest		
operations commence.		

Principle #4: Forest management operations shall maintain or enhance the long-term social and economic well-being of forest workers and local communities.

4.1. The communities within, or adjacent	NE	
given opportunities for employment		
training, and other services.		
4.2. Forest management should meet or	С	
exceed all applicable laws and/or		
regulations covering health and safety of		
employees and their families.	_	
4.2.a The forest owner or manager meets	С	FME reported has reported 36 accidents om the FMU in the
or exceeds all applicable laws and/or		last year, per the following report:
regulations covering health and safety of employees and their families (also see		Monthly Injury and Illness Performance Summary Report Pacadate SAFETY & RISK PROBAM June 2022
Criterion 1.1).		June 2022 PTD 2022 PTD 2021 DNR Work-Related Injury Performance Tagent Court Inter Court Inter Court Inter Tailing Nate
		Total Rescription Support 1.3.2 8 4.7.1 1.1.8 72 3.1.2 3.0.8 DBUT Dipport specific Train Services Torrelation Strain S
		Mere Cans, trie Ad, Kar Man Indonesij Region injury Performance Tagget Caust Bare Count Bare Caust Bare Caust Bare
		Hagina 1-Introduced Add - 22 555 22 5.40 5.55 Region 2-Introduced 4.52 0 3.4 4.86 20 4.11 4.56
		Regins-Jonnomi 4.12 1 - 34 6.06 15 4.14 4.06 Regins-Jonnomi 3.2 2 - 1.3 5.75 1.1 4.88 5.75 CentralOffer 0.55 1 - 1.6 1.06 7 6.88 1.04
		Division Injury Performance Target Court Rate Court Rate Court Rate Vallage Rate
		Diff 6.00 2 - 17 7.84 18 6.00 7.84 (WR 1.00 1 - 3 6.54 2 6.59 6.54 FAW 2.71 4 - 10 6.00 137 3.57 4.69 Fileword/Web Money 0 0 0 0 0 0 0
		Powers 3 - 11 198 8 4.11 5.76 withing 1 - 8 4.00 9 4.36 600 FOR 2.27 0 1.4 3.39 11 2.79 3.39
		First@ring 0 0 - - First@ring 0 - 0 - - Namey 0 0 - 0 - -
		None of the work-related accidents were serious, and no
		fatalities have occurred.
		Health and safety regulations continue to be updated
		related to Covid-19 protocols.
4.2.b The forest owner or manager and	С	Timber harvest permits reviewed in the 2022 FSC evaluation
their employees and contractors		have clauses that refer to related timber purchasing
demonstrate a safe work environment.		documentation, such as the purchaser registration authority,
Contracts or other written agreements		which requires that the purchase submit evidence of
include safety requirements.		licenses/training certification to conduct timber harvests per
		applicable laws and regulations.

		Interviews with forest workers and observation of job sites during the 2022 FSC evaluation demonstrated a safe working environment.
		In the last year, there have been a number of changes in safety or health requirement in contracts or other written agreements related to Covid-19. These include screening requirements for campground hosts and requirements for volunteers.
4.2.c The forest owner or manager hires well-qualified service providers to safely implement the management plan.	С	Interviews with logging contractors and review of logger training records confirm that they are well trained. Loggers must submit evidence of training and qualification via an online system so that the FME can verify trainings, insurance, and other required records before loggers can begin work.
4.3 The rights of workers to organize and voluntarily negotiate with their employers shall be guaranteed as outlined in Conventions 87 and 98 of the International Labor Organization (ILO).	NE	
4.4. Management planning and operations shall incorporate the results of evaluations of social impact. Consultations shall be maintained with people and groups (both men and women) directly affected by management operations.	С	
 4.4.a The forest owner or manager understands the likely social impacts of management activities, and incorporates this understanding into management planning and operations. Social impacts include effects on: Archeological sites and sites of cultural, historical and community significance (on and off the FMU; Public resources, including air, water and food (hunting, fishing, collecting); Aesthetics; Community goals for forest and natural resource use and protection such as employment, subsistence, recreation and health; Community economic opportunities; Other people who may be affected by management operations. A summary is available to the CB. 	C	As a public agency, the MN DNR offers a number of opportunities to collect information about social impacts and incorporating that understanding into management planning and operations. The 2022 FSC audit team confirmed multiple avenues of public outreach and a system to receive and address comments during forest management planning. For example, the MN DNR annually distributes for public review the Annual Stand Exam List, which is a primary opportunity for public input on specific proposed harvests. As part of ongoing forest management planning, the agency also sends the Annual Plan Additions for review. Additionally, the MN DNR utilizes advisory groups for planning on management of selected topics. For example, the DNR Sustainable Timber Harvest Analysis stakeholder advisory group provides input to the Governor-directed analysis of sustainable timber harvest levels on the FMU. The MN DNR has dedicated archeological staff to protect cultural resources. The State Archaeologist publishes an

annual Forest Heritage Program Report. The program conducts reviews of timber sales and other division activities that were considered to have the potential to affect known or previously undocumented heritage resources. Archival and field research is conducted for Division of Forestry and Division of Fish and Wildlife projects. Archaeological sites or other potentially significant properties are identified.
During the 2022 FSC field audit, sites with forest management activity contained a detailed review of the RTE species of flora and fauna. Protections were utilized for management, such as avoidance periods and access during frozen ground periods. Cultural, historical and archaeological reviews were conducted and verified for each field site with forest management activity. MN DNR has a well-defined process and system to identify and protect special sites and species within their land management practices.
FME engages with local citizens, trail users and stakeholder groups on the proposed forest management of DNR lands.
The following activities related to this indicator have occurred in the past year:
 Annual Stand Exam List (ASEL): Public and tribal government input of the DNR FY 2023 ASEL was completed in March 2022. Annual Plan Additions (APA): These input opportunities occur every few months as needed; in FY 2022 there were six different public input opportunities. Section Forest Resource Management Plans (SFRMPs): Northern Minnesota Drift and Lake Plains (MDLP) SFRMP: In the fall 2021, the department coordinated with and gathered initial input from tribal governments. Coming soon: Northern Superior Uplands (NSU) SFRMP: The department initiated a tribal government input process in June 2022 and began a stakeholder input process in July 2022; both will conclude in late August 2022.
Minnesota & Northeast Iowa Morainal (MIM) SFRMPs: At the writing of this form, a tribal

		 government input process is expected to begin very soon. Continuing work on the Deer Management Plan, DNR surveyed constituents to assess preferences for populations, hunting experiences, and impacts of deer populations to inform goal setting for 28 deer permit areas. DNR also will hold Deer Open Houses to take public input, concerns or questions on deer and deer management in the state. Following public input meetings and with help from a wolf plan advisory committee, tribal staff, federal agencies, academic institutions, and other organizations involved in wolf management and research, DNR developed an updated Draft Wolf Management Plan. DNR is currently collecting and evaluating comments submitted on this draft.
4.4.b The forest owner or manager seeks and considers input in management planning from people who would likely be affected by management activities.	С	The FME seeks and considers input on management in several ways. For example, the MN DNR annually distributes for public review the Annual Stand Exam List, which is a primary opportunity for public input on specific proposed harvests. In another example, the DNR Director of Tribal Relations and the DNR Commissioner meet annually with Minnesota's tribal nations to consult on a range of issues that may affect their rights and resources; departmental regional directors also meet regularly with tribal natural resources directors to coordinate on a range of issues of mutual interest.
		 Stakeholder comments received since the last evaluation include: ASEL – FME received five comments (an individual, The Audubon Society, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Sierra Club, and Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe). The Division of Forestry responded to their comments. APA – FME received one comment from an individual. The Division of Forestry responded to their comments. SFRMPs MDLP: Coordinated with Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe and the Division of Forestry responded to their comments. SFRMPs MDLP: Coordinated with Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe and the Division of Forestry responded to their feedback. White Earth Nation opted to wait until the planning process was further along before coordinating. DNR continued work with stakeholder groups on STH implementation concerns and federal aid grant conditions with the

		USFWS Region 3 Wildlife and Sport Fish
		Restoration Program.
4.4.c People who are subject to direct	C	All management planning documents are posted on the
adverse effects of management operations		FME's website prior to the commencement of operations so
are apprised of relevant activities in		that the public may comment. Per interviews with staff, FME
advance of the action so that they may		also contacts adjacent land managers or owners to avoid any
express concern.		potential negative impacts near property boundaries.
		Work with stakeholder groups on STH implementation concerns and federal aid grant conditions with the UWFWS Region 3 Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program is ongoing.
		The FME has developed a procedure, Forest Management on Lands Administered by the Fish and Wildlife Division (dated 21 April 2022). The procedure is currently in draft form; the timeline for finalization and approval is unclear.
		The procedure clarifies the roles and responsibilities of staff from the Divisions of Fish and Wildlife, Forestry, and Ecological and Water Resources during each step of forest management on lands administered by the Division of Fish and Wildlife. Lands affected by the procedure include Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs), Aquatic Management Areas (AMAs), and Land Utilization Project (LUP) lands.
		Once implemented, the procedure, which supplements the existing Interdisciplinary Forest Management Coordination Framework, will be essential to forestry planning and management on these lands and should help to promote collaborative relationships within the DNR and with external stakeholders. The draft procedure is presently being reviewed by the US Fish and Wildlife Service, which leases LUP lands to the FME.
		Conformance with Indicator 4.4.c would be strengthened if the Forest Management on Lands Administered by the Fish and Wildlife Division procedure were approved and implemented in a timely fashion. Additionally, once the procedure is approved, the FME is encouraged to inform relevant external stakeholders about the new procedure and convey the benefits to forestry planning and management that occurs on Division of Fish and Wildlife managed lands. The audit team, therefore, issued an Observation (See Finding 2022.1).
4.4.d For public forests, consultation shall	C	The MN DNR maintains a digital public engagement
include the following components:		platform: https://engage.dnr.state.mn.us/ (accessed 24
		October 2022)

1.	Clearly defined and accessible methods		
	for public participation are provided in		Current opportunities for public input on the agency's
	both long and short-term planning		activities are posted on the platform, as well as
	processes, including harvest plans and		opportunities for involvement in advisory groups.
	operational plans;		
2.	Public notification is sufficient to allow		The Annual Stand Exam List is also available on the FME's
	interested stakeholders the chance to		website and via mass email distribution. The FY23 Annual
	learn of upcoming opportunities for		Stand Exam List is available at
	public review and/or comment on the		https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/forestry/harvesting/plans.htm
	proposed management;		l (accessed 24 October 2022)
3.	An accessible and affordable appeals		
	process to planning decisions is		Minnesota statutes and administrative rules provide for an
	available.		appeals process. For example:
Pla	nning decisions incorporate the results		https://www.revisor.mn.gov/rules/4410.0400/ (accessed 24
of p	public consultation. All draft and final		October 2022)
pla	nning documents, and their supporting		
dat	a, are made readily available to the		
put	olic.		
4.5	. Appropriate mechanisms shall be	NE	
em	ployed for resolving grievances and for		
pro	viding fair compensation in the case of		
los	s or damage affecting the legal or		
cus	tomary rights, property, resources, or		
live	lihoods of local peoples. Measures		
sha	ll be taken to avoid such loss or		
dar	nage.		

Principle #5: Forest management operations shall encourage the efficient use of the forest's multiple products and services to ensure economic viability and a wide range of environmental and social benefits.

5.1. Forest management should strive toward economic viability, while taking into account the full environmental, social, and operational costs of production, and ensuring the investments necessary to maintain the ecological productivity of the forest.	NE	
5.2. Forest management and marketing operations should encourage the optimal use and local processing of the forest's diversity of products.	NE	
5.3. Forest management should minimize waste associated with harvesting and on- site processing operations and avoid damage to other forest resources.	NE	
5.4. Forest management should strive to strengthen and diversify the local	NE	

economy, avoiding dependence on a		
single forest product.		
5.5. Forest management operations shall	NE	
recognize, maintain, and, where		
appropriate, enhance the value of forest		
services and resources such as watersheds		
and fisheries.		
5.6. The rate of harvest of forest products		
shall not exceed levels which can be		
permanentiy sustained.	6	
5.6.a IN FIVIUS where products are being	C	Several years ago, the MIN DNR engaged in a multi-year
narvested, the landowner or manager		Sustainable Timber Harvest Analysis, which identified a
calculates the sustained yield harvest level		sustainable harvest goal of 870,000 cords offered per year,
for each sustained yield planning unit, and		plus an additional 30,000 cords of selected species with high
provides clear rationale for determining the		mortality risk.
size and layout of the planning unit. The		DND environment the vessilte of its Custoinship Timber Hervist
sustained yield harvest level calculation is		Analysis on March 1, 2018, and set a goal of 870,000 cords
documented in the Management Plan.		Analysis on Warch 1, 2018, and set a goal of 870,000 cords
The sustained vield hervest level calculation		per year. There is also the possibility of an additional 30,000
for each planning unit is based on:		because of increasing insect mortality on these species (from
• documented growth rates for particular		emerald ash borer and eastern larch). The analysis behind
 documented growth rates for particular sites, and/or acroage of forest types 		the new harvest level can be found on the MN DNR website:
age-classes and species distributions:		www.dpr.state.mp.us/forestry/baryest-analysis/index.html
 mortality and decay and other factors 		(accessed 24 October 2022)
• Inortality and decay and other factors		
• areas reserved from baryost or subject		The MN DNR employed an outside contractor to assist in the
to harvest restrictions to most other		analysis although the final decision was taken by the
management goals:		department. The analysis followed techniques standard in
 cilvicultural practices that will be 		the forestry industry planning software and growth and
• Silvicultural practices that will be		vield data to analyze a variety of timber production
employed on the FMO,		scenarios from most to least aggressive. The final
future conditions		determination of 870 000 cords did not follow any single
The calculation is made by considering the		modeled scenario but was intended to be a compromise
offects of reported prescribed benuests on		that allowed the MN DNR to increase harvest level while still
the product (species and its account on a		being able to meet its environmental and social
well as planned management treatments		management goals. Areas restricted from harvest
and projections of subsequent regrowth		production, such as designated old growth, were not
beyond single rotation and multiple ro		considered as growing stock contributing the allowable
optrios		harvest.
entries.		
		In February 2018, DNR determined that the sustainable
		harvest level from DNR-managed forestlands for the next
		10-years is 870,000 cords annually. This 10-year number
		reflects a balance of the multiple purposes for which state
		forestlands are managed. Above the 870,000-cord target.
		DNR will undertake a special initiative to offer up to an
		additional 30,000 cords of ash and tamarack annually for up

	1	
		to five years. This is an effort to make productive use of these species, which are threatened by insect problems,
		while also maximizing the likelihood of successful
		reforestation.
		There has been no change in this sustained yield harvest
		level calculation approach in the last year. However, per the
		2018 Sustainable Timber Harvest Determination Report, the
		MN DNR committed to conducting a midpoint assessment
		that reviews progress made and identifies future
		improvements needed. This midpoint assessment has been
		Initiated in the last year. The assessment outcomes will be
E.G.b. Average appual barvect levels, over	6	Communicated in a report in spring 2023.
rolling periods of no more than 10 years do	C	Harvest is an average of 900k cords offered her year over
not exceed the calculated sustained vield		the 10-year period Below are the planned offered sold
harvest level		and harvested volumes for the last 10 years
		DNR Timber Sales 10-Year History
		Cords and Mbf Only; No Re-Offered Volume Planned III Offered* III Sold III Harvested**
		1200
		2013 2014 2015 2016 2017 2018 2019 2020 2021 2022 *Does not include file-Offered Volume **Scaled Cords and MBF units of measure only from FY12 to present
		Note that the purchaser of each permit has 3 years to
		harvest a permit, and approximately 40% of permits are not
5.6.c. Pates and methods of timber baryest	C	Field sites reviewed during the 2022 audit confirmed that
lead to achieving desired conditions and		individual stands are being managed in a way to achieve
improve or maintain health and guality		desired future conditions and maintain health and guality
across the FMU. Overstocked stands and		across the FMU. Examples including harvesting of ash in
stands that have been depleted or		response to emerald ash borer and harvesting to address
rendered to be below productive potential		spruce budworm were observed.
due to natural events, past management,		
or lack of management, are returned to		
desired stocking levels and composition at		
the earliest practicable time as justified in		
management objectives.	6	Commercial howest of NTEDs is requised at the such a require
5.6.0 FOR INTERS, calculation of quantitative		commercial narvest of NTFPS is regulated through a permit
only in cases where products are harvested		significant enough to require a separate sustained harvest
in significant commercial operations or		vield calculation. None have been sold with an ESC claim to
where traditional or customary use rights		date.

situations, the forest owner or manager	
utilizes available information, and new	
information that can be reasonably	
gathered, to set harvesting levels that will	
not result in a depletion of the non-timber	
growing stocks or other adverse effects to	
the forest ecosystem.	

Principle #6: Forest management shall conserve biological diversity and its associated values, water resources, soils, and unique and fragile ecosystems and landscapes, and, by so doing, maintain the ecological functions and the integrity of the forest.

6.1. Assessments of environmental	NE	-
impacts shall be completed appropriate		
to the scale, intensity of forest		
management and the uniqueness of the		
affected resources and adequately		
integrated into management systems.		
Assessments shall include landscape level		
considerations as well as the impacts of		
on-site processing facilities. Environmental		
impacts shall be assessed prior to		
commencement of site-disturbing		
operations.		
6.2 Safeguards shall exist which protect	C	-
rare, threatened and endangered species		
and their habitats (e.g., nesting and		
feeding areas). Conservation zones and		
protection areas shall be established,		
appropriate to the scale and intensity of		
forest management and the uniqueness of		
the affected resources. Inappropriate		
hunting, fishing, trapping, and collecting		
shall be controlled.	_	
6.2.a If there is a likely presence of RTE	С	The Natural Heritage Information System database is used
species as identified in Indicator 6.1.a then		prior to site-disturbing management activities to identify
either a field survey to verify the species'		locations of threatened and endangered species. Area
presence or absence is conducted prior to		foresters review GIS layers for RTE species. During planning,
site-disturbing management activities, or		either at the time of selecting the annual stand exam list or
management occurs with the assumption		when there is an annual plan addition, the heritage database
that potential RTE species are present.		is referenced by the appraisal forester, wildlife biologists,
		plant ecologists, and fisheries biologists, where appropriate.
Surveys are conducted by biologists with		Joint site visits are scheduled, when heeded, for additional
the appropriate expertise in the species of		surveys and to discuss needed modifications to harvest
interest and with appropriate qualifications		planning. Auditors examined stand maps to confirm overlays
to conduct the surveys. If a species is		or rare species and communities.
determined to be present, its location		
should be reported to the manager of the		Additionally, surveys are conducted each year by biologists.
appropriate database.	1	ivinnesota Biological Survey (IVIBS) plant ecologists and

		zoologists conduct surveys throughout the state for rare plants and animals. Examples of recent survey work include baseline botanical field surveys in northern MN to search for and document rare species and county and sub-county records, and rare mammal, reptile, and invertebrate surveys at locations across the state. Regional Nongame Wildlife Specialists and Regional Ecologists coordinate and conduct surveys for rare species on DNR Forestry and/or Fish and Wildlife lands. Examples of recent survey work include red-shouldered hawk (Species of Special Concern, SPC) reassessments of historic observations, and surveys of existing and potential habitat for several rare fern species (moonworts, grapeferns).
6.2.b When RTE species are present or assumed to be present, modifications in management are made in order to maintain, restore or enhance the extent, quality and viability of the species and their habitats. <i>Conservation zones</i> and/or <i>protected areas</i> are established for RTE species, including those S3 species that are considered rare, where they are necessary to maintain or improve the short and long-term viability of the species. Conservation measures are based on relevant science, guidelines and/or consultation with relevant, independent experts as necessary to achieve the conservation goal of the Indicator.	C	The system for reviewing appropriate databases, interdisciplinary review of annual stand exam lists, and joint site visits assures that the appropriate experts are available to recommend and enforce conservation measures for RTE species, notwithstanding staff shortages for some of these experts. Interviews with Ecological and Water Resources (EWR) staff confirmed that the process is working as intended. If a joint site visit leads to a disagreement over planned harvest, an internal dispute resolution process is used to resolve the issue. This interdisciplinary system offers Management Opportunity Areas (MOAs). MOAs are geographic areas where collaboration is front-loaded. They are specific to sub- landscape scales where it benefits the foresters for advanced planning. Timber management, wildlife habitat management, and forest road construction are the primary activities that occurred on DNR certified lands near existing protected areas or conservation zones. Forest management activities are reviewed by Fish and Wildlife and Ecological and Water Resources staff during development of the annual stand exam lists. Additional EWR and FAW input is typically required if an initial screening identifies the occurrence of a
		Measures are implemented to mitigate impacts to those rare features as defined by state and federal law and department policy. Often, protective measures include seasonal avoidance, buffering, or changing of a harvest prescription. Some sites get deferred from harvest to provide survey opportunities to refine RTE species distribution in these stands to minimize impacts when harvest does take place.

		Timber management, wildlife habitat management, and forest road construction, are the primary activities that occurred on DNR certified lands near existing protected areas or conservation zones. Forest management activities are reviewed by Fish and Wildlife (FAW) and Ecological and Water Resources (EWR) staff during development of the 10 year stand list (occurred summer 2019) and annual stand exam lists (every year in September). Additional EWR and FAW input is typically required if an initial screening identifies the occurrence of a rare species, habitat, or plant community.
		Measures are implemented to mitigate impacts to those rare features as defined by state and federal law and department policy. Often, protective measures include seasonal avoidance, buffering, or changing of a harvest prescription. Some sites get deferred from harvest to provide survey opportunities to refine RTE species distributions or in cases where active management may be detrimental to the species persistence on a site. Infrequently, departures from these approaches occur, including the use of interdisciplinary dispute resolution. Differences in management priorities regarding RTE species, habitats and plant community management can be addressed through formal or informal dispute processes involving multiple DNR Divisions (for example, formal dispute in Region 2 recently resolved Botrychium management questions)
6.2.c For medium and large public forests (e.g. state forests), forest management plans and operations are designed to meet species' recovery goals, as well as landscape level biodiversity conservation goals.	С	The SFRMP framework is designed to address landscape composition goals developed by the MFRC. Additionally, the NPC-based system for Desired Future Forest Condition (DFFC) and management prescriptions address biodiversity goals. DNR participates in recovery plans for species that are listed
		federally and within the state. Notable examples are the eastern timber wolf, timber rattlesnake, and Karner blue butterfly.
6.2.d Within the capacity of the forest owner or manager, hunting, fishing, trapping, collecting and other activities are controlled to avoid the risk of impacts to vulnerable species and communities (See	C	DNR's Enforcement Division is the lead for in controlling hunting, fishing, trapping, collecting and other such activities. DNR administers a host of regulations, licenses, and permits to protect state resources.
Criterion 1.5).		In recent years, ATV trail ambassadors have increased in number. Over 200 clubs now participate in the program in the state. Interviews conducted in the field confirmed that

6.3. Ecological functions and values shall	C	law enforcement officers respond readily to requests from other DNR personnel. Management activities that impact RTE species and habitats could happen, only after consultation with FAW and EWR staff. Some high-level protection measures are outlined in the department's online rare species guide. Application of these measures varies by land status and conservation status. State listed species of special concern and species in greatest conservation need (which are not statutorily protected) are more likely to be impacted on lands where economic objectives are prioritized.
be maintained intact, enhanced, or		
restored, including: a) Forest regeneration		
ecosystem diversity. c) Natural cycles that		
affect the productivity of the forest		
ecosystem. 6.3.a.1 The forest owner or manager	C	Landsonne planning and Castier level forest resource
maintains, enhances, and/or restores	Ũ	management plans:
inantains, enhances, and/or restores under-represented <i>successional</i> stages in the FMU that would naturally occur on the types of sites found on the FMU. Where old growth of different community types that would naturally occur on the forest are under-represented in the landscape relative to natural conditions, a portion of the forest is managed to enhance and/or restore old growth characteristics.		 Management plans: Landscape planning and Section level forest resource management plans: Forest age classes are managed using an adaptive management approach during landscape planning. All ownership age-class information was considered in conjunction with the results of the Sustainable Timber Harvest Analysis (STHA) to inform the Department decision on harvest levels and management regimes by cover type, which influence age class distributions on state-administered forest land. The STHA team assessed current age class distributions by cover type and ecological classification system (ECS) subsection using USFS's FIA (Forest Inventory and Analysis) data, CSA (Cooperative Stand Assessment) public inventory data, and DNR's FIM (Forest Inventory Module) inventory data. Staff compared current age class distributions across all ownerships to the age class goals identified in previous Section Forest Resource Management Plans (SFRMP)s. The Mason, Bruce and Girard harvest schedule model was used to project future age class distributions on DNR managed lands under different harvest scenarios. Based on these data and scenarios, DNR leadership considered the amount of older forest to maintain by cover type on

DNR managed lands over the next 10 years as part of the STHA decision
 of the STHA decision. The FME continued implementing the STH decisions through the DNR's 10-year stand exam list (FY 22). This "spatial plan" was built on modelling decisions to address multiple values, including managing Wildlife Management Areas and Special Management Areas under differing regimes designed to specifically benefit wildlife habitat and foster forest characteristics that address diverse forest composition patterns and conditions. In addition, modelling intentionally planned to
maintain an amount of older aspen on DNR managed lands for wildlife habitat. Implementation of the 10-year stand exam list (spatial plan), starting with the FY 21 annual stand exam list, thus ensures that these values are addressed.
 Not all acres on annual stand exam lists result in timber harvest (some are deferred or altered). A portion of these deferrals and alterations will continue to provide older forest/growth stage characteristics into the future (above and beyond what is projected in modelling and planning direction).
 Geography and implementation strategies for management opportunity areas (MOAs) were finalized for the forested ecological sections in the state. These include old forest management complexes, old forest patches, and habitat MOAs to emphasize older forest. The SFRMPs and MOAs will include conversion goals that were developed considering, among other things, distribution of successional stages. The SFRMPs will also provide guidance and strategies on maintaining characteristics of older forest, representing all native plant community (NPC) growth stages on state lands, and diversifying stands appropriately given their NPC.
In addition, DNR site-level management maintains or enhances plant species composition and distribution by (1) following SFRMP guidance related to cover type distribution, which generally guides staff to maintain the distribution of cover types in the ecological section, while moving toward goals for some amount of cover type change (usually approximately 1% over 10 years) to meet various goals associated with forest values such as habitat and addressing

climate change, and (2) as standard practice, the DNR
manages sites appropriately given their native plant
community.
Site-level management:
 community. Site-level management: During interdisciplinary site-level review and management, staff in EWR, FAW, and FOR look for opportunities to maintain or enhance underrepresented successional stages and characteristics on DNR managed lands, particularly in special management areas (SMAs) such as Old Forest Management Complexes (OFMCs), High Conservation Value Forests (HCVF), Management Opportunity Areas (MOAs), and large old patches. In addition, EWR staff provide comments on maintaining or enhancing plant species composition and distribution, especially as it relates to rare species and species with conservation statuses. Older forest or growth stage characteristics are enhanced or maintained through application of best management practices (riparian management zones; legacy patches; retention of characteristics like snags, leave trees, and coarse woody debris). Stands are converted to other cover types appropriate to their native plant community to contribute to SFRMP cover type goals for the section when opportunities arise. In addition, DNR site-level management maintains or enhances plant species composition and distribution through 1) following SFRMP guidance related to cover type distribution, which generally guides staff to maintain the distribution of cover types in the ecological section, while moving toward goals for some amount of cover type change (usually approximately 1% over 10 years) to meet various
approximately 1% over 10 years) to meet various goals associated with forest values such as habitat
and addressing climate change and 2) as standard practice, the DNR manages sites appropriately given
their native plant community.
 Ivianagement of wildlife habitats in forested areas of Minneseta includes forest and open bruchland
management activities on WMAge state forests and
management activities on WMAS, state forests, and
babitat loss fragmentation, and degradation that
nabilations, inaginentation, and degradation that
are identified as the primary challenges racing forest wildlife. Almost one third of the state's 202 Species
of Greatest Concernation Need (SCCN) inhabit
of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN) inhabit

		 forests. FAW Program expenses contributed to the following accomplishments reported in FY22 (note— the extent of many accomplishments were still impacted by impacts of Covid-19 on work requirements and safety protocols): acres in brushland prescribed burns to enhance the quality of brushland habitats for wildlife acres in brushland management on sites to enhance the quality of brushland habitats for wildlife acres in forest prescribed burns to enhance the quality of forest habitats for wildlife acres of forest opening management on openings to enhance forest habitat for wildlife that thrive on small forest openings acres of Forest Stand Improvements on sites to enhance, enhance forest habitat for wildlife A portion of wetland habitat maintenance, enhancement and restoration also occurs on forested lands but is not split out by certified/non-certified lands.
6.3.a.2 When a <i>rare ecological community</i> is present modifications are made in both	C	The Minnesota Biological Survey (MBS) conducts surveys,
the management plan and its		communities as well as individual plants and animals. MBS
implementation in order to maintain,		surveys have been completed in most areas of the state. ECS
restore or enhance the viability of the		plot sampling conducted by field foresters also may function
community. Based on the vulnerability of		to identify rare communities. Information on rare
<i>zones</i> and/or <i>protected areas</i> are		which is reviewed prior to harvests.
established where warranted.		
		SFRMP goals for DFFC of vegetation communities include
		rare, as well as common, communities. Additionally, many
		Areas (SNAs), or HCVs. Many of the wetland communities
		benefit from state BMPs.
		As confirmed in review of timber sale documentation and
		permits during the audit, modifications are made and
		of riparian buffers to protect plant species and communities.
		Rare ecological communities are typically identified by EWR
		during the annual stand exam list process.
		There is an existing Minnesota DNR policy regarding
		stands.
6.3.a.3 When they are present,	С	DNR began to address the protection of old growth forests
management maintains the area, structure,		in 1983, producing the first draft of Old-Growth Forest
composition, and processes of all Type 1		Guidelines in 1988 and implementing the guidelines with a

and **Type 2 old growth**. Type 1 and 2 old growth are also protected and buffered as necessary with conservation zones, unless an alternative plan is developed that provides greater overall protection of old growth values.

Type 1 Old Growth is protected from harvesting and road construction. Type 1 old growth is also protected from other timber management activities, except as needed to maintain the ecological values associated with the stand, including old growth attributes (e.g., remove exotic species, conduct controlled burning, and thinning from below in dry forest types when and where restoration is appropriate).

Type 2 Old Growth is protected from harvesting to the extent necessary to maintain the area, structures, and functions of the stand. Timber harvest in Type 2 old growth must maintain old growth structures, functions, and components including individual trees that function as refugia (see Indicator 6.3.g).

On public lands, old growth is protected from harvesting, as well as from other timber management activities, except if needed to maintain the values associated with the stand (e.g., remove exotic species, conduct controlled burning, and thinning from below in forest types when and where restoration is appropriate).

On American Indian lands, timber harvest may be permitted in Type 1 and Type 2 old growth in recognition of their sovereignty and unique ownership. Timber harvest is permitted in situations where:

- Old growth forests comprise a significant portion of the tribal ownership.
- 2. A history of forest stewardship by the tribe exists.
- 3. High Conservation Value Forest attributes are maintained.

systematic inventory in 1998. As field staff encountered and scored candidate stands, those stands were dropped from the listing of stands to be appraised for harvest, and coded for protection instead. Currently 44,000 acres of old-growth forest are protected on lands managed by the Division of Forestry. There is no distinction between Type 1 and Type 2 old growth—all designated old-growth stands are protected from harvesting.

The process continues today, with an emphasis on lowland conifer types, which are not included in old-growth designation to date. Lowland conifers are abundant in Minnesota, comprising about 50 percent of state lands with ample opportunity to identify and reserve old-growth types. Seventeen NPC types have been identified and as being evaluated as SFRMPs are revised. This includes 41,200 acres of lowland conifers that are reserved from harvest while the process of designating old growth in lowland conifers proceeds.

There is an existing Minnesota DNR policy regarding management in or adjacent to designated old growth stands. DNR is in the process of revising the Old Growth Forest Policy as part of the lowland conifer old growth (LCOG) project.

A query of the FY22 stand exam list shows that 194 out of 4109 stands evaluated for harvest were within 330 feet of candidate or designated old growth stands. These stands were reviewed and management coordinated across divisions as part of regular DNR forest coordination processes. As of 8/17/22, DNR has 48,000 acres of designated old growth and 45,000 acres of candidate old growth, of which 41,000 acres is candidate lowland conifer old growth (LCOG) (detail available upon request).

4. Old-growth structures are maintained.	
5. Conservation zones representative of	
old growth stands are established.	
6. Landscape level considerations are	
addressed.	
7. Rare species are protected.	
of the ownership, particularly on larger ownerships (generally tens of thousands or more acres), management maintains, enhances, or restores habitat conditions suitable for well-distributed populations of animal species that are characteristic of forest ecosystems within the landscape.	and indirectly. Direct management takes place where habitat is managed for a featured species, e.g., sharp-tailed grouse, ruffed grouse, golden-winged warbler; or on state WMAs, such as Kimberly WMA visited during the audit. Indirect management is a product of subsection planning. Representative wildlife species are selected for each
	The newly revised SWAP provides excellent guidance to habitat priorities, with numerous overlays that define priority sites and landscapes. A portion of the statewide sales tax helps fund habitat projects. Two such cooperative projects were inspected during the audit.
	DNR actively manages game and non-game wildlife directly and indirectly. Direct management takes place where habitat is managed for a featured species, e.g., sharp-tailed grouse, ruffed grouse, golden-winged warbler; or on state WMAs. Indirect management is a product of subsection planning. Representative wildlife species are selected for each subsection, followed by management recommendations.
	Management of wildlife habitats in forested areas of Minnesota includes forest and open brushland management activities on WMAs, state forests, and other public lands. This activity is needed to mitigate habitat loss, fragmentation, and degradation that are identified as the primary challenges facing forest wildlife. Almost one third of the state's 292 Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN) inhabit forests.
	FY22, 309 acres of FOR forest stand improvements in R3 as part of the phase 3 forest habitat Lessards-Samms Outdoor Heritage Conservation (LSOHC) funding. Projects included mechanical brush saw to release oak and pine seedlings, hand thinning oak saplings, and woody invasive species chemical control using a backpack sprayer. 3 acres of underplanting large, containerized seedlings for a floodplain restoration project.

		Nongame Wildlife Specialists participate in vegetation management projects to restore or enhance habitat for a range of wildlife species including mammals, birds, reptiles and amphibians and pollinating insects. Examples include fencing and vegetation removal to protect and restore nesting habitat for common terns, piping plovers, wood turtles.
6.3.c Management maintains, enhances	С	RMZs are addressed in Minnesota's Forest management
habitat of Bingrign Management Zones		smaller pocket-sized handbook was printed more recently
(<i>RMZs</i>) to provide:		and was observed frequently in vehicles and cruiser's vests
a) habitat for aquatic species that breed		during the audit. Site visits featured several examples of
in surrounding uplands;		buffer strips along RMZs, where foresters routinely left more
b) habitat for predominantly terrestrial		than the minimum BA and often delineated a buffer strip
species that breed in adjacent <i>aquatic</i>		that was wider than required. No vernal pools were
c) habitat for species that use riparian		familiarity by foresters and cited examples of appropriate
areas for feeding, cover, and travel:		management around such pools.
d) habitat for plant species associated		
with riparian areas; and,		
e) stream shading and inputs of wood		
and leaf litter into the adjacent aquatic		
ecosystem.	6	DND staff use on evaluation description system to identify
6 2 d Management practices maintain or	C	the native plant community for each stand. This information
enhance plant species composition.		is then used to guide the desired plant species composition
distribution and frequency of occurrence		for the site. The DFFC prescribed for each stand reflects the
similar to those that would naturally occur		strategies that will achieve the compositional goals.
on the site.		
6.3.e When planting is required, a local	С	In CY22, nearly all of the reproductive materials used on
source of known provenance is used when		state forest land are native Minnesota materials. Materials
available and when the local source is		are collected and deployed based on seed zones described
productivity. The use of non-local sources		Control. The Silviculture Program used seed sources that
shall be justified, such as in situations		included Jack Pine zones 101. 102 and 105. Red Pine bare
where other management objectives (e.g.		root and container stock was grown from seed cones
disease resistance or adapting to climate		purchased by MN DNR from sources identified to the MN
change) are best served by non-local		township level. The State Forest Nursery (SFN) deploys
sources. <i>Native species</i> suited to the site		seedlings from an adjacent seed zone when necessary. In
are normally selected for regeneration.		some instances, the SFN will purchase seedlings from other
		either the number of seedlings requested, or the species of
		seedlings requested. When this is the case, purchased
		seedlings are from the seed source nearest to the planting
		site or from an adjacent seed zone. Adjacency may cross
		site or from an adjacent seed zone. Adjacency may cross statutory boundaries. For example, some plantings and
		site or from an adjacent seed zone. Adjacency may cross statutory boundaries. For example, some plantings and sowings in southern Minnesota may be from a northern

		deployment and climate related assisted migration, the Division of Forestry is holding seed source control policy revision until FY23. Seed transfer guidance for common Lakes States species and climate related assisted migration projects (e.g., assisted range expansion) follow an internal review and approval process overseen by the Silviculture Program. The Division of Forestry will adopt the USDA Forest Service Eastern Seed Zones as part of the policy revision process
 6.3.f Management maintains, enhances, or restores habitat components and associated stand structures, in abundance and distribution that could be expected from naturally occurring processes. These components include: a) large live trees, live trees with decay or declining health, <i>snags</i>, and well-distributed coarse down and dead woody material. <i>Legacy trees</i> where present are not harvested; and b) vertical and horizontal complexity. Trees selected for <i>retention</i> are generally representative of the dominant species found on the site. 	C	The criteria to retain stand-level wildlife habitat elements such as snags, stumps, mast trees, down woody debris, den trees and nest trees are detailed in the Minnesota Forest Management Guidelines and summarized in the field handbook. Harvested stands inspected generally had legacy and leave tree retention levels consistent with these guidelines. A Green Tree Retention Tipsheet is used as a field reference for retention guidance. Legacy trees have been addressed in a separate directive from the Commissioner's Office in 2012. The department's leave tree and snag guidelines require that "a mix of species representative of the original stand be retained" unless reasons for variance are documented. Foresters interviewed understand and are increasing their compliance with the intent of the guidelines for retaining live trees in their prescriptions. Auditors observed many harvest sites that contained reserve patches. Site visits during the 2022 audit confirmed conformance with 6.3.f, see section 2.1 for field site observations. Harvested areas included reserve areas, individual snags and reserve trees, and downed woody debris. 35,145 acres of even-aged harvests were on permits closed in FY22. DNR timber sales permits are required to follow the Minnesota Forest Resource Council's Site Level Management Guidelines that cover live, standing, and downed woody
6.3.g.1 In the Southeast, Appalachia, Ozark-Ouachita, Mississippi Alluvial Valley, and Pacific Coast Regions, when <i>even-aged</i> <i>systems</i> are employed, and during salvage harvests, live trees and other native vegetation are retained within the harvest unit as described in Appendix C for the applicable region.	C	Even-aged sites visited in 2022 were in conformance with FRC Site Level Management Guidelines.

In t Mo eve em trea pro con dist low rest C fc guid	he Lake States Northeast, Rocky untain and Southwest Regions, when n-aged silvicultural systems are ployed, and during salvage harvests, live es and other native vegetation are ained within the harvest unit in a portion and configuration that is sistent with the characteristic natural curbance regime unless retention at a rer level is necessary for the purposes of toration or rehabilitation. See Appendix or additional regional requirements and dance.		
6.3	g.2 Under very limited situations, the	NA	FME reported no departures from even-age management
land	downer or manager has the option to		guidelines established for 6.3.g.1, and the audit team did not
dev	elop a qualified plan to allow minor		observe any in the field or detect any in timber harvest
dep	parture from the opening size limits		prescription documentation reviewed.
des	cribed in Indicator 6.3.g.1. A qualified		
piai 1	1: Is developed by gualified experts in		
1.	ecological and/or related fields		
	(wildlife biology, bydrology, landscape		
	ecology, forestry/silviculture).		
2.	Is based on the totality of the best		
	<i>available information</i> including peer-		
	reviewed science regarding natural		
	disturbance regimes for the FMU.		
3.	Is spatially and temporally explicit and		
	includes maps of proposed openings		
	or areas.		
4.	Demonstrates that the variations will		
	result in equal or greater benefit to		
	wildlife, water quality, and other		
	values compared to the normal		
	opening size limits, including for		
_	sensitive and rare species.		
5.	Is reviewed by independent experts in		
	wildlife biology, hydrology, and		
	landscape ecology, to confirm the		
6.2	b The forest owner or manager	C	DNP has a well developed program for identifying
20.3	esses the risk of prioritizes and as		controlling and monitoring invasive species. Responsibility is
war	ranted, develops and implements a		shared with the state Department of Agriculture and US
stra	itegy to prevent or control <i>invasive</i>		Forest Service. DOA's Plant Protection Division is responsible
spe	<i>cies</i> , including:		for risk assessments related to invasive plants. The State
1.	a method to determine the extent of		Invasive Species Strategy categorizes risks. The department
	invasive species and the degree of		has an Invasive Species Control Program. Operational Order
	threat to native species and		113 (9/21/17) outlines invasive species control and

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 6.5.a The forest owner or manager has written guidelines outlining conformance with the Indicators of this Criterion. 6.5.b Forest operations meet or exceed Best Management Practices (BMPs) that address components of the Criterion where 	C C	Minnesota DNR has a comprehensive program for the protection of wetlands and watercourses and a detailed volume of guidelines developed and published by MFRC: "Sustaining Minnesota Forest Resources: Voluntary Site- Level Forest Management Guidelines for Landowners, Loggers and Resource Managers" (2012). BMPs are emphasized in training, sale administration, and monitoring. Trained foresters and/or biologists plan and oversee all management activities, with review and approval
the operation takes place		by senior managers. MFRC Site-Level Forest Management Guidelines are followed, and the "Quick Reference Field Guide" version was found to be used frequently in the field. Field sites inspected during the audit demonstrated compliance with BMP guidelines.
 6.5.c Management activities including site preparation, harvest prescriptions, techniques, timing, and equipment are selected and used to protect soil and water resources and to avoid erosion, landslides, and significant soil disturbance. Logging and other activities that significantly increase the risk of landslides are excluded in areas where risk of landslides is high. The following actions are addressed: Slash is concentrated only as much as necessary to achieve the goals of site preparation and the reduction of fuels to moderate or low levels of fire hazard. Disturbance of topsoil is limited to the minimum necessary to achieve successful regeneration of species native to the site. Rutting and compaction is minimized. Soil erosion is not accelerated. Burning is only done when consistent with natural disturbance regimes. Natural ground cover disturbance is minimized to the extent necessary to achieve regeneration objectives. Whole tree harvesting on any site over multiple rotations is only done when research indicates soil productivity will not be harmed. 	C	DNR has developed written guidelines to avoid unacceptable levels of rutting during timber harvest, and guidelines are included as a condition in permits to cut timber. These requirements are a key part of a comprehensive program to protect soil productivity. Foresters who administer timber sales, as well as supervisors who check timber sales, are aware of them. No rutting in excess of these guidelines was observed during inspections of ongoing and completed timber harvests. Field observations also confirmed ample amounts of retained down woody debris, and planning to minimize skid trails. Foresters interviewed in the field were adept at working with harvest contractors to employ appropriate harvesting equipment, interrupting jobs during wet weather, and requiring harvests on frozen ground when appropriate. Where biomass is harvested, it is required that 20% of limbs and tops are left on the site or hauled back from the landing and redistributed. Field inspections confirmed that this practice was being followed. Controlled fire is often employed in fire-dependent community types, and DNR personnel are well-trained in the use of control fire and suppression of wildfires.

Low impact equipment and technologies is		
used where appropriate.		
6.5.e.1 In consultation with appropriate	С	SMZ buffers are in the MFRC Site-Level Guidelines (revised
expertise, the forest owner or manager		2012) to take into account the work of the Riparian Science
implements written Streamside		Technical Committee. They evaluated riparian management
Management Zone (SMZ) buffer		zone width and residual basal area recommendations, even
management guidelines that are adequate		vs. uneven aged distinctions, and applicable water
for preventing environmental impact, and		features.
include protecting and restoring water		
quality, hydrologic conditions in rivers and		In response to a CAR issued last year, the FME has
stream corridors, wetlands, vernal pools,		strengthened conformance with Indicator 6.5.e.1 by
seeps and springs, lake and pond		improving field training about RMZs. Additionally, the FSC
shorelines, and other hydrologically		audit team found all RMZs observed at field sites to be on
sensitive areas. The guidelines include		conformance with the state guidelines.
vegetative buffer widths and protection		
measures that are acceptable within those		In early March of 2022, the Forest Management Academy
buffers.		(FMA) hosted a training workshop for forest managers
		focused on "Revisiting Riparian Management Zones and
In the Appalachia, Ozark-Ouachita,		Filter Strips" in light of DNR policy on implementation of the
Southeast, Mississippi Alluvial Valley,		Minnesota Forest Resources Council's (MFRC) Site-level
Southwest, Rocky Mountain, and Pacific		Forest Management Guidelines (FMGs).
Coast regions, there are requirements for		
minimum SMZ widths and explicit		A planning team comprising members of Forestry, Fisheries,
limitations on the activities that can occur		Wildlife, and Ecological and Water Resources was formed to
within those SMZs. These are outlined as		develop presentation content on riparian management
requirements in Appendix E.		zones and filter strips including specific timber sale
		mitigation strategy examples from field foresters. 96 staff
		from 3 Divisions attended the 3-hour workshop. Attendees
		contributed to a vibrant discussion of various issues
		surrounding the FMGs on riparian area and filter strip
		management. The workshop has been recorded and is
		available to anyone involved with forest coordination.
		Following completion of the workshop, the planning team
		developed a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document
		summarizing the workshop information and many of the
		questions posed by forest managers during the interactive
		portions of the training. This document is available on the
		MFRC Site-level Guidelines Policy page of the DNR intranet
		(interdisciplinary Forest Management Policy System.
		The purpose of the Riparian Management Zones and Filter
		Strips Frequently Answered Questions (FAQs) document is
		to address and provide summary responses to a variety of
		common questions related to filter strip and riparian area
		forest management guidelines (FMGs). The FMGs were
		developed by the Minnesota Forest Resources Council
		(MFRC) to mitigate negative outcomes potentially associated

		with timber harvest and ensure the sustainability of Minnesota's forest resource. Implementation of the FMGs is mandated by policy for timber harvests on State lands. Nonetheless, situations can arise where additional clarity may be needed to correctly implement the FMGs. This document is intended to address a variety of questions posed by practitioners working to implement the FMGs on active timber harvests. The intended audience for this FAQ document is DNR staff involved with timber sale planning, administration, and coordination. However, many of the questions may be relevant to a broader audience of practitioners engaged in timber harvest planning and administration.
6.5.e.2 Minor variations from the stated	С	The MFRC Site-Level Guidelines allow variable buffer widths.
minimum SMZ widths and layout for		Auditors most often observed that foresters exceeded
specific stream segments, wetlands and		guidelines when administering harvests, but noted that
other water bodies are permitted in limited		there is an expectation for judgements based on site
circumstances, provided the forest owner		conditions, sensitive species, and condition of standing trees
or manager demonstrates that the		within streamside buffers.
alternative configuration maintains the		
overall extent of the buffers and provides		
equivalent or greater environmental		
requirements for these stream segments		
water quality, and aquatic species, based		
on site-specific conditions and the best		
available information. The forest owner or		
manager develops a written set of		
supporting information including a		
description of the riparian habitats and		
species addressed in the alternative		
configuration. The CB must verify that the		
variations meet these requirements, based		
on the input of an independent expert in		
aquatic ecology or closely related field.		
6.5.f Stream and wetland crossings are	С	Similar to other BMPs, foresters interviewed during the
avoided when possible. Unavoidable		audit were quite familiar with guidelines for stream and
crossings are located and constructed to		wetland crossings, and appropriate practices were
minimize impacts on water quality,		implemented in the field.
hydrology, and fragmentation of <i>aquatic</i>		
habitat. Crossings do not impede the		
movement of aquatic species. Temporary		
crossings are restored to original		
nyurological conditions when operations		
are initistieu.	C	Trails inspected during the audit were well maintained and
o.5.8 Recreation use on the FIVIO IS	Ľ	in conformance with site-level guidelines. Some trails are
water plants wildlife and wildlife babitate		micomormatice with site-level guidelines. Some trails die maintained by the Parks Division, and many are maintained
water, plants, whunte and whunte habitats.		
		through cooperative agreement with clubs and organizations. Unauthorized ATV use, often a problem on
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		public lands, appears to be well managed and maintained on
		Minnesota state forest lands.
		OHV groups are trained to monitor trail use and report trail
		damage to DNR officials. DNR's Enforcement Division
		actively involved enforces compliance with laws and
		regulations related to hunting, fishing, trapping, collecting,
		and other recreational activities.
6.5.h Grazing by domesticated animals is	С	Grazing is not allowed on Minnesota state forest lands, and
controlled to protect in-stream habitats		no unauthorized grazing was observed during the audit.
and water quality, the species composition		
and viability of the riparian vegetation, and		
the banks of the stream channel from		
erosion.		
6.6. Management systems shall promote	NE	
the development and adoption of		
environmentally friendly non-chemical		
methods of pest management and strive		
to avoid the use of chemical pesticides.		
World Health Organization Type 1A and 1B		
and chlorinated hydrocarbon pesticides;		
pesticides that are persistent, toxic or		
whose derivatives remain biologically		
active and accumulate in the food chain		
beyond their intended use; as well as any		
pesticides banned by international		
agreement, shall be prohibited. If		
chemicals are used, proper equipment and		
training shall be provided to minimize		
health and environmental risks.		
6.7. Chemicals, containers, liquid and solid	NE	
non-organic wastes including fuel and oil		
shall be disposed of in an environmentally		
appropriate manner at off-site locations.		
6.8. Use of biological control agents shall	NE	
be documented, minimized, monitored,		
and strictly controlled in accordance with		
national laws and internationally accepted		
scientific protocols. Use of genetically		
modified organisms shall be prohibited.		
6.9. The use of exotic species shall be	C	
carefully controlled and actively		
monitored to avoid adverse ecological		
impacts.		

6.9.a The use of <i>exotic species</i> is contingent on the availability of credible scientific data indicating that any such species is non-invasive and its application	С	DNR does not plant exotic tree species. DNR takes measures to control and eradicate Scots pine, which were planted in the mid-1900s.
does not pose a risk to native biodiversity.		MN DOT developed a Native Seed Mix Design for Roadsides guide in 2010. The Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources cooperates with DNR on extensive materials related to using and restoring native vegetation.
		Per interviews with FME staff and field observation, DNR no longer plants exotic tree species. Legacy plantings are being phased out, for example Scots pine (Pinus sylvestris), which was planted used for management purposes in the mid- 1900s. No use of exotic species was observed on areas visited during the audit.
6.9.b If exotic species are used, their provenance and the location of their use are documented, and their ecological effects are actively monitored.	NA	Site specific planting/seeding plans are used and required, even for seed mixes. Only native tree species were observed during the audit. Therefore, this indicator is not applicable.
6.9.c The forest owner or manager shall take timely action to curtail or significantly reduce any adverse impacts resulting from their use of exotic species	С	Per interviews with FME staff and field observation, there were no instances of exotic species used for management purposes in the areas of the audit.
 6.10. Forest conversion to plantations or non-forest land uses shall not occur, except in circumstances where conversion: a) Entails a very limited portion of the forest management unit; and b) Does not occur on High Conservation Value Forest areas; and c) Will enable clear, substantial, additional cocura long term concernation 	NE	
benefits across the forest management unit.		

Principle #7: A management plan -- appropriate to the scale and intensity of the operations -- shall be written, implemented, and kept up to date. The long-term objectives of management, and the means of achieving them, shall be clearly stated.

7.1. The management plan and supporting	C
documents shall provide:	
a. Management objectives. b) description	n
of the forest resources to be managed	
environmental limitations, land use	
and ownership status, socio-economic	
conditions, and a profile of adjacent	
lands.	
b. Description of silvicultural and/or	
other management system, based on	

 the ecology of the forest in question and information gathered through resource inventories. d) Rationale for rate of annual harvest and species selection. e) Provisions for monitoring of forest growth and dynamics. f) Environmental safeguards based on environmental assessments. g) Plans for the identification and protection of rare, threatened and endangered species. b) h) Maps describing the forest resource base including protected areas, planned management activities and land ownership. i) Description and justification of harvesting techniques and equipment to be used. 		
7.1.a The management plan identifies the ownership and legal status of the FMU and its resources, including rights held by the owner and rights held by others.	C	The Division of Lands and Minerals provides real estate services to the MN DNR, including maintenance of deeds, leases and easements. Related mapping information is available as GIS data. The legal framework, including the statues that establish the DNR's authority to manage state lands, can be found on the DNR webpage and, as such, is considered part of the forest management plan
7.1.b The management plan describes the history of land use and past management, current forest types and associated development, size class and/or successional stages, and natural disturbance regimes that affect the FMU (see Indicator 6.1.a).	C	Section Forest Resource Management Plans (SFRMPs) cover vision, goals, and objectives based on past land uses. The Ecological Classification System (ECS) includes descriptions of landscape history and natural disturbance regimes. Stand exams cover size classes and successional stages and are used to inform statewide assessments of size and age class distributions. Other management planning components, cover land use history and past management. GIS and other databases are used to track management activities.
7.1.c The management plan describes: a) current conditions of the timber and non-timber forest resources being managed; b) desired future conditions; c) historical ecological conditions; and d) applicable management objectives and activities to move the FMU toward desired future conditions.	С	SFRMPs and stand level operational plans address include current conditions, desired future conditions, historical ecological conditions, and management objectives and activities to move state lands toward desired future conditions. Specific forest management activities are described on operational plans for harvest sites.
7.1.d The management plan includes a description of the landscape within which the FMU is located and describes how landscape-scale habitat elements described in Criterion 6.3 will be addressed.	C	The Minnesota Forest Resources Council (MFRC) has identified major forested landscapes within Minnesota in SFRMP plans. The landscape program is guided by a broad set of principles and goals set by the MFRC. These provide regional committees with a context for undertaking landscape-level planning and coordination. Recognizing the

		variability in environmental, economic and community characteristics among landscape regions, goals, and principles are well-defined yet broad. The MN DNR also has Best Management Practices and ECS manuals that are available to state forestry staff and contractors. An example of the quick reference guide, Minnesota's Forest Management Guidelines (dated 2014), was observed by the audit team.
 7.1.e The management plan includes a description of the following resources and outlines activities to conserve and/or protect: rare, threatened, or endangered species and natural communities (see Criterion 6.2); plant species and community diversity and wildlife habitats (see Criterion 6.3); water resources (see Criterion 6.5); soil resources (see Criterion 6.3); Representative Sample Areas (see Criterion 6.4); High Conservation Value Forests (see Principle 9); Other special management areas. 	C	The document, DNR's Forest Management Plan, includes numerous links to other documents and information that cover this FSC requirement. For example, State Forest and State Wildlife Action Plans, which describe the high-level strategy guiding management of state lands, are included. Likewise, information about landscape and site level approaches are described. Specific, on-the-ground activities and methods to conserve and/or protect the values identified in this requirement are included in regulations and BMPs.
7.1.f If invasive species are present, the management plan describes invasive species conditions, applicable management objectives, and how they will be controlled (see Indicator 6.3.j).	С	The MN DNR has developed an Invasive Species Program for the state. Each DNR division has its own policies and separate implementation guides. Invasive species control efforts are coordinated by the DNR Ecological Resources Division and the Minnesota Invasive Species Council. An invasive species operational order 113 Invasive Species Prevention and Management is also an important document to that guides management.
7.1.g The management plan describes insects and diseases, current or anticipated outbreaks on forest conditions and management goals, and how insects and diseases will be managed (see Criteria 6.6 and 6.8).	С	The MN DNR Forest Health Monitoring Program and State Department of Agriculture assess risks and implement protection measures. SFRMP plans also include strategies for forest health.
7.1.h If chemicals are used, the plan describes what is being used, applications, and how the management system conforms with Criterion 6.6.	С	SFRMP operational documents describe pesticide use. Additionally, ESRAs have been developed for each of the chemicals that the MN DNR uses in forestry operations.
7.1.i If biological controls are used, the management plan describes what is being used, applications, and how the management system conforms with	С	The Minnesota Department of Agriculture regulates use of biological control agents. The Minnesota Forest Protection Plan and SFRMP documents integrated pest control techniques that utilize biological controls. There are several

Criterion 6.8.		resources on biological controls used by DNR, such as for
		purple loosestrife and buckthorn.
7.1.j The management plan incorporates	С	The compendium of management plan documents includes
the results of the evaluation of social		the Minnesota 2020 State Forest Action Plan, which
impacts, including:		addresses the elements of the indicator. The department
 traditional cultural resources and 		also has policies that address laws on historic preservation.
rights of use (see Criterion 2.1);		SFRMPs consider these elements. MFRC conducts economic
 potential conflicts with customary 		development studies. Planned activities on state lands are
uses and use rights (see Criteria		responsive to regional economic goals.
2.2, 2.3, 3.2);		
 management of ceremonial, 		
archeological, and historic sites		
(see Criteria 3.3 and 4.5);		
 management of aesthetic values 		
(see Indicator 4.4.a);		
 public access to and use of the 		
forest, and other recreation issues:		
 local and regional socioeconomic 		
conditions and economic		
opportunities, including creation		
and/or maintenance of quality jobs		
(see Indicators 4.1.b and 4.4.a),		
local purchasing opportunities (see		
Indicator 4.1.e), and participation		
in local development opportunities		
(see Indicator 4.1.g).		
7.1.k The management plan describes the	С	SFRMPs include road plans. Likewise, WMAs have road
general purpose, condition and		access plans. Additionally, the MN DNR has detailed OHV
maintenance needs of the transportation		access plans and GIS transportation and road condition
network (see Indicator 6.5.e).		layers. Timber access plan are included in SFRMPs.
7.1.I The management plan describes the	С	Minnesota Site Level Guidelines, SFRMPs, and the
silvicultural and other management		Silviculture Handbook describe silvicultural systems used.
systems used and how they will sustain,		Native Plant Community and ECS classifications are used to
over the long term, forest ecosystems		inform silvicultural approaches.
present on the FMU.		
7.1.m The management plan describes how	С	The MN DNR website includes detailed information about
species selection and harvest rate		sustainable timber harvest analysis, decisions, and planning.
calculations were developed to meet the		This includes how species selection and harvest rate
requirements of Criterion 5.6.		calculations were developed.
7.1.n The management plan includes a	С	SFRMP plans include monitoring protocols. Additionally, MS
description of monitoring procedures		89A.07 requires the DNR and MFRC to complete forest
necessary to address the requirements of		resource monitoring, practices and compliance monitoring,
Criterion 8.2.		and effectiveness monitoring. Procedures are available
		online to staff and the public and referenced in management
		plans (for example, MRFC site-level monitoring).

		The MN DNR also annually conducts an annual management
		review of the implementation of the agency's third-party
		forest certifications. An internal memo (dated 22 August
		2022) describing the outcomes of the review for 2022 was
		shared with the audit team.
7.1.0 The management plan includes maps	С	The MN DNR has a robust GIS system that covers all
describing the resource base, the		mapping requirements. Most of the data is available to the
characteristics of general management		public through the Forest Inventory Viewer, a collection of
zones, special management areas, and		web applications that provide interactive map-based access
protected areas at a level of detail to		to a variety of DNR Forestry geographic datasets. These
achieve management objectives and		include forest inventory data for state-administered lands,
protect sensitive sites.		SFRMPs, and proposed harvest sites for DNR's annual timber
		harvest plans. In addition, the SFRMP and annual timber
		harvest plan map interfaces include a method to submit
		public comments regarding proposed management actions
		for specific stands via online forms.
7.1.p The management plan describes and	С	MFRC's Forest Management Guidelines recommend the use
justifies the types and sizes of harvesting		of equipment that has low impact, such as low ground
machinery and techniques employed on		pressure machinery. The guidelines also discuss the merits
the FMU to minimize or limit impacts to the		of tree-length and cut-to-length harvesting systems relative
resource.		to site objectives.
7.1.q Plans for harvesting and other	С	SFRMP timber sale packets meet this requirement (e.g.,
significant site-disturbing management		timber harvest permits, contracts, etc.).
activities required to carry out the		
management plan are prepared prior to		
implementation. Plans clearly describe the		
activity, the relationship to objectives,		
outcomes, any necessary environmental		
safeguards, health and safety measures,		
and include maps of adequate detail.		
7.1.r The management plan describes the	С	Statewide forest management plans and the SFRMP process
stakeholder consultation process.		describes public involvement process.
7.2 The management plan shall be	С	
periodically revised to incorporate the		
results of monitoring or new scientific and		
technical information, as well as to		
respond to changing environmental, social		
and economic circumstances.		
7.2.a [he management plan is kept up to	C	The MIN DNR develops forest resource plans on a 10-year
date. It is reviewed on an ongoing basis and		cycle. Annual stand exam lists are be pulled from the 10-year
is updated whenever necessary to		stand examilist each year and made available for public
incorporate the results of monitoring or		review and comment. Several components of the
new scientific and technical information, as		management plan are updated annually, as confirmed via
well as to respond to changing		review of SFRMPs, timber sale permits, and other
environmental, social and economic		documents made available during the audit.
circumstances. At a minimum, a full		
revision occurs every 10 years.		

7.3 Forest workers shall receive adequate training and supervision to ensure proper implementation of the management plans.	С	
7.3.a Workers are qualified to properly implement the management plan; All forest workers are provided with sufficient guidance and supervision to adequately implement their respective components of the plan.	C	The MN DNR staff interviewed verified that training is a requirement to maintain professional credentials and, in some cases, to remain employed with the state. For example, training on updated harassment policies is required to continue working with the organization. FME field staff conduct regular inspections of active harvest sites to ensure that loggers and properly implementing the management plan.
7.4 While respecting the confidentiality of information, forest managers shall make publicly available a summary of the primary elements of the management plan, including those listed in Criterion 7.1.	С	
7.4.a While respecting landowner confidentiality, the management plan or a management plan summary that outlines the elements of the plan described in Criterion 7.1 is available to the public either at no charge or a nominal fee.	C	The MN DNR website is the central public repository for the management plan. It functions as the required public summary of the management plan and, as such, demonstrates conformance with this indicator.
7.4.b Managers of public forests make draft management plans, revisions and supporting documentation easily accessible for public review and comment prior to their implementation. Managers address public comments and modify the plans to ensure compliance with this Standard.	C	All draft plans open for public comment, including those pertaining to the Division of Forestry, are available on the MN DNR website. Responses to comments and any modifications made are made available to the public as part of the management planning process.

Principle #8: Monitoring shall be conducted -- appropriate to the scale and intensity of forest management -- to assess the condition of the forest, yields of forest products, chain of custody, management activities and their social and environmental impacts.

8.1 The frequency and intensity of monitoring should be determined by the scale and intensity of forest management operations, as well as, the relative complexity and fragility of the affected environment. Monitoring procedures should be consistent and replicable over time to allow comparison of results and assessment of change.	С	
8.1.a Consistent with the scale and intensity of management, the forest owner or manager develops and consistently implements a regular, comprehensive, and replicable written monitoring protocol.	С	Per review of monitoring evidence cited in C8.2, FME demonstrates conformance to this indicator. Procedures are often available online to staff and the public (e.g., regeneration), and often referenced in management plans (e.g., Pest Management).

8.2. Forest management should include	С	
the research and data collection needed to		
monitor, at a minimum, the following		
indicators: a) yield of all forest products		
harvested. b) growth rates. regeneration.		
and condition of the forest, c) composition		
and observed changes in the flora and		
fauna, d) environmental and social		
impacts of baryesting and other		
operations and e) cost productivity and		
efficiency of forest management		
8.2 a 1 For all commercially baryested	C	Since the last ESC audit forest monitoring activities includes
products, an inventory system is	C	and wore not limited to the following:
products, an inventory system is		and were not innited to, the following.
maintained. The inventory system includes		Staff continue to measure 1/10-acre plots (PBI)
at a minimum: a) species, b) volumes, c)		across most public ownership to use in conjunction
stocking, d) regeneration, and e) stand and		with remote sensing data (lidar & imagery) to create
forest composition and structure; and f)		a highly accurate forest inventory across these
timber quality.		ownerships. This data, along with aerial
		photography and other remote sensing data are
		currently being used to investigate how to improve
		old growth forest monitoring.
		 The five-year FIA measurement cycle continues
		every year, which provides the state and federal
		agencies information about growth rates,
		regeneration, harvests, natural changes, and general
		forest conditions statewide.
		• Guideline monitoring of approx. 100 harvested sites
		continue annually as well.
		• All of this information provides critical data about
		the state's forested landscape and the changes
		 In CV21 6 346 acres of aerial regeneration survey
		assessment for quaking aspen, black spruce, and
		tamarack forest cover types EV22.12, 240 acres of
		around regeneration survey assessment for all forest
		ground regeneration survey assessment for all forest
		cover types.
		 In FY22, 820 acres of case study monitoring on 10
		projects published on the Great Lakes Silviculture
		Library
8.2.a.2 Significant, unanticipated removal	С	Blowdown is tracked during annual stand exams or through
or loss or increased vulnerability of forest		regular patrols, per interviews with staff. Fire damaged
resources is monitored and recorded.		stands are also tracked through fire control and suppression
Recorded information shall include date		activities. All such unanticipated losses detected are
and location of occurrence, description of		recorded, including dates, location, types of disturbance,
disturbance, extent and severity of loss,		and extent. Where possible, these areas are offered for
and may be both quantitative and		salvage harvests.
qualitative.		

8.2.b The forest owner or manager	C	Approximate annual commercial production of non-timber
maintains records of harvested timber and		forest products included in the scope of the certificate for
NTFPs (volume and product and/or grade).		FY22 was 3,481 cord equivalents
Records must adequately ensure that the		
requirements under Criterion 5.6 are met.		
 periodically obtains data needed to monitor presence on the FMU of: 1) Rare, threatened and endangered species and/or their <i>habitats</i>; 2) Common and rare plant communities and/or habitat; 2) Location presence and abundance of 		 Biological Survey, Regional Nongame Wildlife Specialists, Regional Ecologists) participate in a range of monitoring activities. Examples from the last year include, among others: The MBS Ecological Monitoring Network project continued collecting data from native grasslands, forests, and wetlands throughout the state as part of
 invasive species; Condition of protocted arous set 		a long-term status and trends monitoring project.
 4) Condition of protected areas, setasides and buffer zones; 5) High Conservation Value Forests (see Criterion 9.4). 		 The goal is to determine how vegetation changes in response to stressors such as climate change and invasive species populations. Monitoring sites were established on a mix of ownerships throughout Minnesota over this reporting period, including certified State Forests and Wildlife Management Areas. More information on this project can be found at: https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/mbs/ecologicalmonito ring/index.html Monitoring of Richardson ground squirrel colonies, four-toed salamander presence in vernal pools, and breeding activity in high priority northern goshawk territories. Continued field testing of monitoring protocols for the rare plant, ram's head lady's-slipper, and the rare native plant community, central dry jack pine
8.2.d.1 Monitoring is conducted to ensure that site specific plans and operations are properly implemented, environmental impacts of site disturbing operations are minimized, and that harvest prescriptions and guidelines are effective.	С	Records of close-out records for completed timber harvest permits were reviewed for a sample of timber sale permits visited during the audit. These records include verification that site-specific plans have been implemented in alignment with the conditions on the permit.
8.2.d.2 A monitoring program is in place to	С	Per interviews with staff and observation of road conditions
assess the condition and environmental impacts of the forest-road system.		during the audit, the FME regularly monitors the road system and makes timely upgrades. All roads were found to be in good condition.
8.2.d.3 The landowner or manager	С	Social impact monitoring activities that have occurred in the
monitors relevant socio-economic issues		last year include, among others:
(see Indicator 4.4.a), including the social		 Continuing work on the Deer Management Plan,
impacts of harvesting, participation in local economic opportunities (see Indicator		DNR surveyed constituents to assess preferences for populations, hunting experiences, and impacts of

4.1.g), the creation and/or maintenance of		deer populations to inform goal setting for 28 deer
quality job opportunities (see Indicator		permit areas. DNR also will hold Deer Open Houses
4.1.b), and local purchasing opportunities		to take public input, concerns or questions on deer
(see Indicator 4.1.e).		and deer management in the state.
		 Following public input meetings and with help from
		a wolf plan advisory committee, tribal staff, federal
		agencies, academic institutions, and other
		organizations involved in wolf management and
		research, DNR developed an updated Draft Wolf
		Management Plan. DNR is currently collecting and
		evaluating comments submitted on this draft.
		On an annual basis, the Fish and Wildlife Division contracts
		with the USFWS cooperative unit to conduct human
		dimensions surveys. Recent surveys have sought hunter,
		angler, and landowner input on panfish, turkey, deer, elk,
		and ruffed grouse management. In addition, in-house
		research staff also conduct statistically valid HD mail and
		internet surveys. Results of these surveys are used to inform
		Division and Departmental decision-making.
8.2.d.4 Stakeholder responses to	С	Confirmed via review of communication records between
management activities are monitored and		stakeholders and the FME on setting up harvested and
recorded as necessary.		planned timber harvests visited during the audit.
8.2.d.5 Where sites of cultural significance	С	No such sites were reviewed in the 2022 audit, but staff
exist, the opportunity to jointly monitor		interviewed were knowledgeable of procedures and policies
sites of cultural significance is offered to		related to consultation with tribes. FME also conducted a
tribal representatives (see Principle 3).		training on cultural sites that tribes participated in.
		In the last year, the MN DNR has appointed its first Director
		of Tribal Relations. The position is occupied by a tribal
		member. The director focuses on engagement (formal
		government-to-government consultation, technical
		coordination, etc.) with tribal governments though their
		elected leaders and staff. The director and the department's
		Commissioner meet annually with Minnesota's tribal nations
		to consult on a range of issues that may affect their rights
		and resources. Additionally, the department's regional
		directors meet regularly with tribal natural resources
		directors to coordinate on a range of issues of mutual
		interest, which may include the opportunity to jointly
		monitor sites of cultural significance.
8.2.e The forest owner or manager	C	Plan monitoring for costs and revenues associated with the
monitors the costs and revenues of		FME's operations are completed on an annual and ongoing
management in order to assess		basis. Annual School Trust land Cost Certification reports
productivity and efficiency.		also include information on costs and revenue.
8.3 Documentation shall be provided by	С	
the forest manager to enable monitoring		

and certifying organizations to trace each		
forest product from its origin, a process		
known as the "chain of custody."		
8.3.a When forest products are being sold	С	Plan monitoring for various elements are completed on an
as FSC-certified, the forest owner or		annual and ongoing basis. School Trust land reports also
manager has a system that prevents mixing		include information on costs and revenue.
of FSC-certified and non-certified forest		
products prior to the point of sale, with		
accompanying documentation to enable		
the tracing of the harvested material from		
each harvested product from its origin to		
the point of sale.		
8.3.b The forest owner or manager	С	Refer to SCS COC indicators for FMEs.
maintains documentation to enable the	-	
tracing of the harvested material from each		
harvested product from its origin to the		
point of sale.		
8.4 The results of monitoring shall be	С	
incorporated into the implementation and	_	
revision of the management plan.		
8.4.a The forest owner or manager	С	As an example of monitoring long-term objectives and
monitors and documents the degree to		nonconformances, the FME provided a copy of the 2022
which the objectives stated in the		Annual Management Review of the DNR implementation of
management plan are being fulfilled, as		the Sustainable Forestry Initiative and Forest Stewardship
well as significant deviations from the plan.		Council Forest Management Standards.
		The department has also begun its mid-point monitoring of
		the implementation of the Sustainable Timber Harvest
		decision. The monitoring is ongoing and the assessment
		outcomes will be communicated in a report in spring 2023.
		Pre-planning assessments to identify current resource
		conditions and trends are completed in preparation for plan
		updates. Mid-point monitoring also occurs for these Section
		level Forest Resource Management Plans (SFRMPs)
		Additionally, in response to a CAR issued last year, the MN
		DNR has strengthened conformance with Indicator 8.4.a.
		Specifically, the Fish and Wildlife Division (FAW) has created
		a new reporting form designed to provide a record of the
		project management, conservation partners, and project
		goals, strategies and steps for the implementation of a site-
		level project from proposal through to completion. This form
		will include a definition of desired project outcomes ("what
		does done look like"), a threshold for success and a
		monitoring plan to determine if goals are being, or have
		been, met.

 8.4.b Where monitoring indicates that management objectives and guidelines, including those necessary for conformance with this Standard, are not being met or if changing conditions indicate that a change in management strategy is necessary, the management plan, operational plans, and/or other plan implementation measures are revised to ensure the objectives and guidelines will be met. If monitoring shows that the management objectives are not sufficient to ensure conformance with this Standard, then the objectives and guidelines themselves are not sufficient are modified. 8.5 While respecting the confidentiality of C information for a context and standard in the context and standard. 		
8.4.b Where monitoring indicates that C management objectives and guidelines, including those necessary for conformance with this Standard, are not being met or if changing conditions indicate that a change in management strategy is necessary, the management plan, operational plans, and/or other plan implementation measures are revised to ensure the objectives and guidelines will be met. If monitoring shows that the management objectives and guidelines themselves are not sufficient to ensure conformance with this Standard, then the objectives and guidelines are modified.		
	The FME ha updates to reports rela published r include asso of potential detected.	as a strategic plan that includes a schedule for several components of the FMP. Monitoring inted to the implementation of SFRMPs are egularly. Internal audits and management review essments of achieving objectives, and what types l actions must be taken to correct any deviations
	activities, if Among othe seeding, very openings, a includes a r which each implementa visit and ob documente specifically in 2021. The audit te Habitat Pro field persor its purpose implementa	any, should be implemented. er topics, the form covers tree planning and getation control, mowing/sheering, wildlife nd mechanical/chemical items. The form also ecord of project implementation supervision in site visit is documented and a post-practice ation monitoring plan/record in which each site servations on the level of project success is d. The presence of the monitoring plan/record addresses the topic of the finding that was issued eam reviewed a sample of completed Wildlife ject Reports during the FSC audit. Interviews with anel confirmed their knowledge of the new form, , and completion of training associated with its ation.
	A copy of the temporarily storing thes Habitat Ma system is cu the implem system. The newly of Report, was metrics for manageme	he form for each FAW project will be housed of at the FAW Area office with the planned goal of se documents in FAWs Wildlife and Aquatic magement Application (WAHMA) database. The urrently undergoing a major restructuring, but entation form is in line to be part of the updated created reporting form, Wildlife Habitat Project is reviewed by the audit team. The form includes the degree to which its objectives in the int plans are fulfilled and what additional

of monitoring indicators, including those		
listed in Criterion 8.2.		
listed in Criterion 8.2. 8.5.a While protecting landowner confidentiality, either full monitoring results or an up-to-date summary of the most recent monitoring information is maintained, covering the Indicators listed in Criterion 8.2, and is available to the public, free or at a nominal price, upon request.	C	 There are several documents that include monitoring results that a publicly available, including: Growth and Yield of all forest products harvested: Site-Level Forest Management Reports and Sustainable timber harvest analysis Forest dynamics and changes in composition of flora and fauna: Site-Level Forest Management Reports, Performance and Accountability, Natural Heritage Information System, and SFRMP Monitoring Reports Environmental Impacts: Site-Level Forest Management Reports, Social Impacts: Site-Level Forest Management Reports Social Impacts: Site-Level Forest Management Reports Costs, Productivity, and Efficiency: Biennial report to Governor and Legislature. Performance and
		Accountability, and School Trust Lands Reports

Principle #9: Management activities in high conservation value forests shall maintain or enhance the attributes which define such forests. Decisions regarding high conservation value forests shall always be considered in the context of a precautionary approach.

High Conservation Value Forests are those that possess one or more of the following attributes:

- a) Forest areas containing globally, regionally or nationally significant: concentrations of biodiversity values (e.g., endemism, endangered species, refugia); and/or large landscape level forests, contained within, or containing the management unit, where viable populations of most if not all naturally occurring species exist in natural patterns of distribution and abundance
- b) Forest areas that are in or contain rare, threatened or endangered ecosystems
- c) Forest areas that provide basic services of nature in critical situations (e.g., watershed protection, erosion control)

Forest areas fundamental to meeting basic needs of local communities (e.g., subsistence, health) and/or critical to local communities' traditional cultural identity (areas of cultural, ecological, economic or religious significance identified in cooperation with such local communities).

9.1 Assessment to determine the presence	NE	
of the attributes consistent with High		
Conservation Value Forests will be		
completed, appropriate to scale and		
intensity of forest management.		
9.2 The consultative portion of the	NE	
certification process must place emphasis		
on the identified conservation attributes,		
and options for the maintenance thereof.		
9.3 The management plan shall include	NE	
and implement specific measures that		
ensure the maintenance and/or		
enhancement of the applicable		

conservation attributes consistent with		
the precautionary approach. These		
measures shall be specifically included in		
the publicly available management plan		
summary.		
9.4 Annual monitoring shall be conducted	С	
to assess the effectiveness of the		
measures employed to maintain or		
enhance the applicable conservation		
attributes.		
9.4.a The forest owner or manager	С	Staff within EWR (Minnesota Biological Survey, Regional
monitors, or participates in a program to		Nongame Wildlife Specialists, Regional Ecologists)
annually monitor, the status of the specific		participate in a range of monitoring activities related to High
HCV attributes, including the effectiveness		Conservation Value features. Examples include in the last
of the measures employed for their		year include:
maintenance or enhancement. The		• Ongoing monitoring of rare plants and native plant
monitoring program is designed and		communities in HCVF sites in southeast Minnesota,
implemented consistent with the		including monitoring the state threatened plant
requirements of Principle 8.		fern-leaf false foxglove (Aureolaria pedicularia) in an
		HCVF site in Whitewater WMA.
		• Annual census of rare orchid populations in Kittson,
		Mower, Norman, Pennington, Polk and Rock
		Counties in conjunction with TNC, USFWS, and NPS,
		including long-term monitoring of the federally-
		listed Western prairie fringed orchid and dwarf
		trout-lily.
		,
		Additionally, in 2021 two projects were initiated to develop
		pilot monitoring programs related to High Conservation
		Values, specifically for a rare plant (ram's head lady's-slipper
		orchid) and native plant community (central dry jack pine
		woodland, EDc23 NPC), and another to monitor the amount
		and condition of DNR-managed old growth forests. Results
		from the pilot monitoring efforts related to the rare plant
		and community were presented to DNR leadership in
		November 2021 and are being evaluated to inform future
		monitoring activities In 2022 DNR implemented the 2nd
		year of its old growth forest network monitoring project
		Staff and leadership from 4 divisions (FWR_FOR_PAT_FAW)
		are involved and support this work Currently the FMF is in
		the middle of testing 4 different remote sensing based
		methods in two northern MN landscapes as well as a revised
		version of the field-based rapid assessment at 60 sites across
		the state. In addition, the FME recently applied for LCCMR
		funding to further develop a remote sensing-based
		monitoring approach that will allow us to be more strategic

9.4.b When monitoring results indicate	С	Per interviews with key staff (e.g., wildlife and ecology), FME
increasing risk to a specific HCV attribute,		has not observed any additional threats that staff are not
the forest owner/manager re-evaluates the		already aware of and none have increased significantly.
measures taken to maintain or enhance		
that attribute, and adjusts the		
management measures in an effort to		
reverse the trend.		

Principle #10: Plantations shall be planned and managed in accordance with Principles and Criteria 1--9, and Principle 10 and its Criteria. While plantations can provide an array of social and economic benefits, and can contribute to satisfying the world's needs for forest products, they should complement the management of, reduce pressures on, and promote the restoration and conservation of natural forests.

As confirmed via field observation and review of the FMP and site-specific plans, the FME practices natural/seminatural forest management.

Appendix 6 – Chain of Custody Indicators for FMEs Conformance Table

SCS FSC Chain of Custody Indicators for Forest Management Enterprises, V8-0

1. Quality Management

1.1 The FME shall appoint a management representative as having overall	⊠C
responsibility and authority for the organization's compliance with all	□ NC
applicable requirements of this standard.	
Evidence 1.1 : As confirmed via staff interviews, the Timber Program	
Supervisor has overall responsibility. Others involved are the Scaling	
Coordinator and Forest Certification Program Consultant.	
1.2 A system shall be implemented to track and trace all products that are	⊠C
sold with an FSC Claim from the <i>forest of origin</i> to the <i>forest gate(s)</i> . When	□ NC
legally required, and for group and multiple FMU certificates, this system	□ NA, FME does not sell
shall also be documented.	any products with an
The forest of origin should be the smallest reportable manageable unit, such as a tax parcel.	FSC claim
It shall never be larger than a Forest Management Unit (FMU).	
The forest gate is defined as the point where the change in ownership of the certified-forest	

enter ticket numbers from each load harvested into the Timber Sale Module (TSM). The appraisal, notice of sale, and other permit-specific	
information is housed in the TSM.	
Load tickets are issued to the logger at the pre-sale meeting. A lockbox is installed at the landing, which is where the lockbox stub from each load ticket are placed. Each ticket includes a book, destination, and a lockbox stub; the destination sub it provided to the purchaser (i.e., mill). The lockbox stub includes the permit number, species, volume, and the destination. The book stub stays in the ticket book, which is provided back to the sale administrator along with any leftover tickets at the conclusion of the permit.	
Mills provide the MN DNR with scale reports, generally on a daily basis. Batches of scale reports are uploaded to TSM for the permit. Lockbox stubs, consumer stubs (i.e., destination stubs for mills that have a Consumer Scale Agreement with the MN DNR), and scale reports are reconciled.	
1.3 The FME shall maintain complete records of all FSC-related COC activities, including sales and training, for at least 5 years.	⊠ C □ NC
Evidence 1.3 : Confirmed via review of procedures and sampled documents, as well as interviews with staff.	
1.4 The FME shall define its <i>forest gate(s)</i> (check all that apply):	⊠ C □ NC
□ Stump	
occurs <u>upon</u> harvest.	
Stumpage sale of sales of standing timber; transfer of ownership of certified-forest product occurs upon harvest. On-site concentration yard Transfer of ownership of certified-product occurs at concentration vard under control of FME.	
Stumpage sale of sales of standing timber; transfer of ownership of certified-forest product occurs upon harvest. On-site concentration yard Transfer of ownership of certified-product occurs at concentration yard under control of FME. Off-site Mill/ Log Yard/ Port Transfer of ownership occurs when certified-product is unloaded or paid for at purchaser's	
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Stumpage sale of sales of standing timber; transfer of ownership of certified-forest product occurs upon harvest. On-site concentration yard Transfer of ownership of certified-product occurs at concentration yard under control of FME. Ø Off-site Mill/ Log Yard/ Port Transfer of ownership occurs when certified-product is unloaded or paid for at purchaser's facility or a facility under the purchaser's control. Auction house/ Brokerage Transfer of ownership occurs at a government-run or private auction house/ brokerage. Lump-sum sale/ Per Unit/ Pre-Paid Agreement A timber sale in which the buyer and seller agree on a total price for marked standing trees or for trees within a defined area before the wood is removed — the timber is usually paid for before harvesting begins. Similar to a per-unit sale. Log landing Transfer of ownership of certified-product occurs at landing/yarding areas. Other (Please describe): 1.5 The FME shall have sufficient control over its forest gate(s) to ensure that there is no risk of mixing of FSC-certified forest products covered by the server of the SM(COC) artificate with forest products covered by the server of the serverification to the server of the server of t	✓ C ✓ NC
Stampage sale of sales of standing timber; transfer of ownership of certified-porest product occurs upon harvest. On-site concentration yard Transfer of ownership of certified-product occurs at concentration yard under control of FME. Off-site Mill/ Log Yard/ Port Transfer of ownership occurs when certified-product is unloaded or paid for at purchaser's facility or a facility under the purchaser's control. Auction house/ Brokerage Transfer of ownership occurs at a government-run or private auction house/ brokerage. Lump-sum sale/ Per Unit/ Pre-Paid Agreement A timber sale in which the buyer and seller agree on a total price for marked standing trees or for trees within a defined area before the wood is removed — the timber is usually paid for before harvesting begins. Similar to a per-unit sale. Log landing Transfer of ownership of certified-product occurs at landing/yarding areas. Other (Please describe): 1.5 The FME shall have sufficient control over its forest gate(s) to ensure that there is no risk of mixing of FSC-certified forest products covered by the scope of the FM/COC certificate with forest products from outside of the scope prior to the transfer of ownership.	☑ C ☑ NC ☑ NA, FME does not sell any products with an

Evidence 1.4/1.5 : Timber is sold as Consumer Scaled (i.e., off-site) and Sold	
on Appraised Volume (i.e., lump-sum). In both cases, the forest gate occurs	
only after three conditions have been met: (1) all conditions of the permit	
have been met; (2) payment has been received by DNR; and (3) permit is	
closed.	
1.6 The FME and its contractors shall not process FSC-certified material	⊠C
prior to transfer of ownership at the <i>forest gate(s)</i> without conforming to	□ NC
applicable chain of custody requirements.	🗆 NA
NOTE: This does not apply to log cutting or de-barking units, small portable sawmills, on-site	
processing of chips/biomass or primary processing of Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFPs)	
under evaluation.	
Evidence 1.6 : Occasionally, permit holders will produce clean chips for sale	
as part of an operation. For both biomass and when merchandising a blend	
of species, the stand is reappraised since it would involve combining	
multiple species in each load. In all cases, the same COC procedures as for	
logs are followed.	
1.7 The FME has supported transaction verification conducted by SCS and	□c
Assurance Services International (ASI) by providing samples of FSC	□ NC
transaction data as requested by SCS.	☑ NA, no verification
NOTE: Pricing information is not within the scope of transaction verification data disclosure.	requested
1.8 The FME shall support fiber testing by surrendering samples and	□c
specimens of materials and information about species composition and the	□ NC
location where the sample originated for verification, as requested by its	⊠ NA, no verification
certification body, ASI or FSC.	requested
Evidence 1.7/1.8: The MN DNR has not been requested to support	
transaction verification.	

2. Product Control, Sales and Delivery

2.1. Products from the certified forest area shall be identifiable as certified	⊠C
at the <i>forest gate(s)</i> .	□ NC
	NA, FME does not sell any products with an FSC claim
Evidence 2.1 : All loads leave the FMU with load tickets, providing an audit	
trail for all material leaving the FMUs. This ensures that such material is	
documented as being 100% FSC certified. Load tickets include a website link	
at which the current FSC code and claim are posted. Auditor reviewed a	
sample of completed load tickets. Additionally, the permit number is	
painted on each load.	

2.2 Information about all products sold shall be compiled and documented	⊠C
for all FMUs in the scope of certification, including:	□ NC
1) Common and scientific species name;	
2) Product name or description;	
3) Volume (or quantity) of product;	
4) Information to trace the material to the source of origin harvest block;	
5) Harvest date;	
6) If basic processing activities take place in the forest, the date and	
volume/quantity produced; and	
7) Whether or not the material was sold with an FSC Claim.	
Evidence 2.2: Items 1) through 7) are documented in the TSM database	
used to track volumes, species, and other harvest-related information.	
2.3. The FME shall ensure that all sales documents issued for outputs sold	⊠C
with FSC claims include the following information:	□ NC
a) name and contact details of the FME;	□ NA, FME does not sell
b) information to identify the customer, such as their name and address;	any products with an
c) date when the document was issued;	FSC claim
d) product name or description, including common and scientific species	
name(s);	
e) quantity of products sold;	
f) the FME's FSC Forest Management (FM/COC) or FSC Controlled Wood	
(CW/FM) code;	
g) clear indication of the FSC claim for each product item or the total	
products as follows:	
i. the claim "FSC 100%" for products from FSC 100% product	
groups; or	
ii. the claim "FSC Controlled Wood" for products from FSC	
Controlled Wood product groups.	
2.4 If the sales documentation issued by the FME is not included with the	□c
shipment of the product and this information is relevant for the customer	□ NC
to identify the product as being FSC certified, the related delivery	🖾 NA, delivery
documentation has included the same information as required in indicator	documentation not
2.3 and a reference linking it to the sales documentation.	required or FME is not
Note: 2.3 and 2.4 are based on FSC-STD-40-004 V3-0 Clauses 5.1 and 5.3	responsible for issuing
	any products with an
	ESC claim
Evidence 2.3/2.4 : Between the permit and load tickets, all required	
information is provided. Load tickets correspond to permits, providing an	
auditable stump-to-gate paper trail.	

2.5 If the FME is unable to include the FSC claim and/or certificate code in	□c
sales or delivery documents, the required information has been provided to	□ NC
the customer through supplementary documentation (e.g. supplementary	☑ NA, all information
letters). In this case, the FME has obtained permission from SCS to	included per 2.3 and/or
implement supplementary documentation in accordance with the following	2.4
criteria:	
a. there shall exist clear information linking the supplementary	
documentation to the sales or delivery documents;	
b. there is no risk that the customer will misinterpret which products are	
or are not FSC certified in the supplementary documentation; and	
c. where the sales documents contain multiple products with different	
FSC claims, each product shall be cross-referenced to the associated	
FSC claim provided in the supplementary documentation.	
Evidence 2.5 : As described under the evidence for 2.3/2.4, between the	
permit and load tickets, all required information is provided. Load tickets	
correspond to permits, providing an auditable stump-to-gate paper trail.	
2.6 The FME may identify products exclusively made of input materials from	□c
small or community producers by adding the following claim to sales	□ NC
documents: "From small or community forest producers." This claim can be	☑ NA, not a small or
passed on along the supply chain by certificate holders.	community producer; or
A forest management unit (FMU) or group of FMUs that meet(s) the small and low-intensity	does not wish to pass
managed forest eligibility criteria (FSC-STD-1-003a) and addenda. A community FMU must	along this claim
comply with the tenure and management criteria defined in FSC-STD-40-004.	
Evidence 2.6:	

3. Labeling and Promotion

□ NA − FME does not use/ intend to use trademarks and no trademark uses were detected during the audit.	
□ NA – CW/FM certificates are not allowed to use FSC trademarks and no trademark uses were detected during the audit (<i>Note: it is a Major nonconformity to 3.1 if CW/FM certificates are found to be using trademarks</i>).	
3.1 The FME shall adhere to relevant trademark use requirements of FSC-	⊠C
STD-50-001 described in the SCS Trademark Annex for FMEs.	□ NC
Evidence 3.1 : Refer to evidence and findings cited in applicable trademark checklist(s) cited below.	
□ FSC trademark use was detected for a CW/FM certificate as described in Major CAR for 3.1, FSC-STD-30-010, Annex 3, 1.2, and FSC-STD-50-001, 2.1e and 11.2:	

4. Outsourcing

□ NA – FME does not outsource any COC-related activities, as confirmed	
via interviews, sales documentation, and field observation.	
⊠ NA – FME outsources low-risk activities such as transport and harvesting,	
as confirmed via interviews, sales documentation, and field observation.	

4.1 The FME shall provide the names and contact details of all outsourced	□c
service providers.	□ NC
4.2 The FME shall have a control system for the outsourced process and	□c
agreement which ensures that:	□ NC
a) The material used for the production of FSC-certified material is	
traceable and not mixed with any other material prior to the point of	
transfer of legal ownership;	
b) The outsourcer keeps records of FSC-certified material covered under	
the outsourcing agreement;	
c) The FME issues the final invoice for the processed or produced FSC-	
certified material following outsourcing;	
d) The outsourcer only uses FSC trademarks on products covered by the	
scope of the outsourcing agreement and not for promotional use;	
e) The outsourcer does not further outsource the material; and	
f) The outsourcer accepts the right of the certificate body to audit them.	
Evidence 4.1/4.2: Per above, this is NA. The MN DNR outsources low-risk	
activities such as transport and harvesting, as confirmed via interviews,	
sales documentation, and field observation.	

5. Training and/or Communication Strategies/

5.1 All relevant FME staff and outsourcers shall be trained in the FME's COC	⊠C
control system commensurate with the scale and intensity of operations	□ NC
and shall demonstrate competence in implementing the FME's COC control	
system.	
5.2 The FME shall maintain up-to-date records of its COC training and/or	⊠C
communications program, such as a list of trained employees, completed	□ NC
COC trainings or communications, the intended frequency of COC training	
(e.g., training plan), and related program materials (e.g., presentations,	
memos, contracts, employee handbooks, etc.).	
Evidence 5.1/5.2 : Procedures for the COC system are described during the	
pre-sale meeting with permit holder, and ongoing administration of the	
permit through in-person visits helps to ensure conformance. In addition,	
the MN DNR has an appraiser training course ("scaling school") for new	
foresters. A review of a sample of training records verified that the MN DNR	
maintains up-to-date records of its COC training.	

Appendix 7 – Trademark Standard Conformance Table

1. General Requirements for Use of the FSC Trademarks

(FSC "checkmark-and-tree" logo, initials "FSC," and/or name "Forest Stewardship Council")

Description of how the FME currently uses, or intends to use, FSC trademarks and/or labels, including but not limited to printed materials, Internet applications, on-product labeling, and other public-facing media:	FME uses the FSC logo and other trademarks on its website and has received approval from SCS. No other uses were detected during the remote audit.
other public-facing media:	

 \Box All known uses reviewed.

Sample reviewed. Rationale that sample choice is sufficient to confirm requirements are met:

□ Trademark uses detected include those grandfathered in under prior FSC trademark rules (e.g., FSC-TMK-50-201). Place the initials "GF" by the specific Trademark Applications above. *Note: This only applies to printed items or physical promotional materials (e.g., hats, load tickets) in stock. New printings, items, and websites must be updated per FSC-STD-50-001 requirements. If the organization only has GF uses and no new uses, the rest of this checklist is NA.*

1.2 Trademark License Agreement and valid certificate	Maintained on file by SCS Main Office
trademark license agreement and hold a valid certificate.	
Note: Consultations for certification Organizations applying for forest	
management certification or conducting activities related to the	
implementation of controlled wood requirements, may refer to FSC by name	
and initials for stakeholder consultation.	
Evidence 1.2: Maintained on file by SCS Main Office.	
1.6 Product Group List	⊠C
The products intended to be labeled or promoted as FSC certified have been	□ NC
included in the organization's certified product group list.	□ C w/ OBS/ c/ OBS
Evidence 1.6:	
Refer to Product Groups List in Public Summary Report;	
□ The following nonconformance(s) were detected in Product Groups:	
□ Refer to OBS related to Product Groups:	
1.3 Trademark License Code	⊠C
The FSC trademark license code assigned by FSC to the organization	□ NC
accompanies any use of the FSC trademarks. It is sufficient to show the code	□ C w/ OBS/ c/ OBS
once per product or promotional material.	
1.4 Trademark Symbol	⊠C
The FSC logo and the 'Forests For All Forever' marks shall include the	□ NC
trademark symbol [®] in the upper right corner when used on products or	🗆 C w/ OBS/ c/ OBS
materials to be distributed in a country where the relevant trademark is	🗆 NA, one or more
registered.	of noted exceptions
For use in a country where the trademark is not yet registered, use of the	applies/
symbol is recommended. The frademark registration List document is	
available in the LSC flate-mark point and marketing toolkit. The symbol $^{\circ}$ shall also be added to (ESC) and (Earest Steward-chip Council' at	
the first or most prominent use in any text, one use per material is sufficient	
(e.g. website or brochure).	

NOTE: The use of the trademark symbol is not required for FSC claims in sale	S
and delivery documents, or for the disclaimer statement specified in	
requirement 6.2.	
2.1 Restrictions on using FSC trademarks	⊠C
The organization has not used the FSC trademarks in the following ways:	
a) in a way that could cause confusion, misinterpretation, or loss of	
credibility to the FSC certification scheme;	
b) in a way that implies that FSC endorses, participates in, or is responsible	
for activities performed by the organization, outside the scope of	
certification;	
c) to promote product quality aspects not covered by FSC certification;	
d) in product brand or company names, such as 'FSC Golden Timber' or	
website domain names;	
e) in connection with FSC controlled wood or controlled material – they sh	all
not be used for labelling products or in any promotion of sales or sourci	ng
of controlled material or FSC controlled wood; the initials FSC shall only	be
used to pass on FSC controlled wood claims in sales and de-livery	
documentation, in conformity with FSC chain of custody requirements.	
2.2 Translations	⊠C
The name 'Forest Stewardship Council' has not been replaced with a	
translation. A translation may be included in brackets after the name, for	
example: Forest Stewardship Council [®] (translation)	
	translations
Fuidence 1.2.1.4.2.1 and 2.2.	
Evidence 1.3, 1.4, 2.1, and 2.2:	
Evidence 1.3, 1.4, 2.1, and 2.2: Image: Second state of the s	
 Evidence 1.3, 1.4, 2.1, and 2.2: ☑ Refer to Trademark uses reviewed above; □ The following nonconformance(s) were detected; or 	
 Evidence 1.3, 1.4, 2.1, and 2.2: Refer to Trademark uses reviewed above; The following nonconformance(s) were detected; or Refer to OBS: 	
Evidence 1.3, 1.4, 2.1, and 2.2: ☑ Refer to Trademark uses reviewed above; □ The following nonconformance(s) were detected; or □ Refer to OBS: Sections 8 and 9 Graphic Rules	⊠ C
 Evidence 1.3, 1.4, 2.1, and 2.2: ☑ Refer to Trademark uses reviewed above; □ The following nonconformance(s) were detected; or □ Refer to OBS: Sections 8 and 9 Graphic Rules The organization has only used FSC logos that conform to the standard 	⊠ C □ NC
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	🖾 NA, trademarks
	no used for
	segregation marks/
Evidence Graphic Rules, 1.5, and 4.6: 🗵 Refer to Trademark uses reviewed	
above;	
□ The following nonconformance(s) were detected; or	
□ Refer to OBS:	

2. On-Product Use of FSC Trademarks

⊠ NA, no use of on-product trademarks (*on-product checklist may be deleted*)

3. Promotional Use of FSC Trademarks

□ NA, no use of promotional trademarks (promotional checklist may be deleted)

6.1 Catalogues, Brochures, and Websites	
When the FSC trademarks have been used in catalogues, brochures, or	⊠C
websites, the following requirements apply:	□ NC
• It is sufficient to present the promotional elements only once in catalogues,	$\Box C w / OBS / c / OBS$
brochures, websites, etc.	\square NA not using
• If both FSC-certified and uncertified products are listed then a text such as "Look	trademarks in
for our FSC [®] -certified products" shall be used next to the promotional elements	
and the FSC-certified products shall be clearly identified.	hrochures/websites
 If some or all of the products are available as FSC certified on request only, this is be clearly stated. 	brocharcs/websites
6.2 Sales and Delivery Documents	
When the ESC trademarks are included on sales or delivery document	
templates that may be used for both ESC and non-ESC products, the following	
or a similar statement is included: "Only the products that are identified as	□ C w/ OBS/ c/ OBS
such on this document are ESC certified"	🖾 NA, not using
NOTE: Use of the ESC claim and certificate code on the invoices does not qualify	trademarks on
as FSC trademark use	templates for FSC &
	non-FSC products
6.3 Promotional Items	□C
All promotional items (e.g., mugs, pens, T-shirts, caps, banners, vehicles, etc.)	□ NC
have displayed, at minimum, the FSC logo and FSC trademark license code.	🗆 C w/ OBS/ c/ OBS
	🖾 NA, not labeling
	promotional items
6.5 Trade Fairs	
When the FSC trademarks are used for promotion at trade fairs, the	□C
organization has:	□ NC
a) clearly marked which products are FSC certified, or	🗆 C w/ OBS/ c/ OBS
b) add a visible disclaimer stating "Ask for our FSC [®] -certified products" or	🖾 NA, not using
similar if no FSC-certified products are displayed.	trademarks at trade
NOTE: Use of text to describe the FSC certification of the organization does not	fairs
require a disclaimer.	
Section 6.6 and 6.7 Investment/Financial Claims	□c

 6.6 When investment companies or others are making financial claims based on the organization's FSC certified operations, the organization has taken full responsibility for the use of the FSC trademarks. 6.7 Any such claims have been accompanied by the disclaimer, "FSC is not responsible for and does not endorse any financial claims on returns on investments." 	 □ NC □ C w/ OBS/ c/ OBS ☑ NA, not making financial claims about FSC status
7.1 and 7.2 Other Forestry Certification Scheme Logos	⊠C
The FSC trademarks have not been used together with the marks of other	
forest certification schemes in a way which implies equivalence, or in a way	🗆 C w/ OBS/ c/ OBS
which is disadvantageous to the FSC trademarks in terms of size or placement.	□ NA, not using
	other scheme logos
7.3 Business Cards	
The FSC trademarks have not used on business cards to promote the	⊠C
organization's certification.	□ NC
The FSC logo or 'Forests For All Forever' marks are not used on business cards	□ C w/ OBS/ c/ OBS
for promotion.	🗆 NA, approval
A text reference to the organization's FSC certification, with license code, is	granted prior to July
allowed, for example "We are FSC [®] certified (FSC [®] C######)" or "We sell FSC [®] - certified products (FSC [®] C######)".	1, 2011
7.4 Promotion with CB Logo	⊠C
FSC certified products have not been promoted using only the SCS Kingfisher	□ NC
and/or SCS Global Services logo.	🗆 C w/ OBS/ c/ OBS
Evidence 6.1-6.3, 6.5-6.7, 7.1-7.4: ⊠ Refer to Trademark uses reviewed above; □ The following nonconformance(s) were detected; or □ Refer to OBS:	

Annex A: Trademark use management system

⊠ NA, not using a trademark management system (Annex A checklist may be deleted)

Annex B, Additional trademark rules for group FM certificate holders

⊠ NA, not a group FM certificate or group does not use FSC trademarks (*Annex B checklist may be deleted*)

Appendix 8 – Group Management Program

This is not a group certificate, so this appendix is not applicable.